YOUNG DRIVERS INVOLVED IN INJURY PRODUCING CRASHES: WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT LIFE AND THE ACCIDENTS?

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PREFACE

The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia chose "Young Drivers" as a major focus for the 1985 research agenda of its Traffic Safety Planning and Research Department. The goal was to gather data about social, cultural and existential variables that influence young drivers in British Columbia. To achieve this goal a young driver research design was developed. It included in-depth interviews with young drivers who were involved in injury-producing crashes, group interviews with grade ten, eleven and twelve students in selected British Columbia secondary schools, face-to-face interviews with teachers, driving school instructors, British Columbia Motor Vehicle Department examiners and students' parents, completion of questionnaires by samples of grade ten, eleven and twelve licensed and unlicensed British Columbia students, analysis of aggregate provincial accident data and review of provincial coroner data.

This document addresses only the methodology and findings of the in-depth interviews with young drivers who were involved in injury-producing crashes. It is anticipated that the results will be used for future development of social/intervention programs relevant to young drivers. The other components of the young driver research design are fully described in separate reports. A compilation of all research components will be published in the near future.

INTRODUCTION

So many traffic safety researchers have described young drivers as a definable unit; a "problem" of societal concern. Young drivers, although structurally indefinable by age, location, etc., are often collectively defined as a "public problem" requiring solutions. This definition, however, has arisen from other people's representations of young driver behaviour (Gusfield, 1981). As a result, the focus for research has been to spotlight "proper topics" of studies and accommodating methodologies.

To date the intellectual countryside for study tends to be risk-taking, exposure to risk, personality, driver violations, age and driver training. The methodologies of study are usually the analysis of surveys and aggregrate accident involvement and exposure data, based on pre-categorized topics developed for causal or correlative analysis, and, to a lesser extent, structured interviews.

The emphasis on these limited topics on young drivers has prevented clear thinking about the social territory outside the spotlight. Yet, to us this is a substantive area. Here we find the presystem that produces the system: how young drivers create, reason and sustain their particular sense of reality. Such a motherlode of information is vital, since it helps to clarify how people's sense of reality regulates their flow of events (Goffman, 1967). The fact that young drivers' interpretations of reality do not parallel researchers' matters little. If we wish to examine young drivers and driving seriously we need to understand how they employ common-sense reasoning to organize such social reality components as group membership, views of self, articulated roles, social types, flow of events and rules of action. In short, we need to begin at the beginning. How do young drivers interpret features of reality and adjust their actions accordingly? By starting from this point we selected our materials according to the canons of the street and related them to the canons of scholarship (Scott and Turner, 1965).

From our perspective, a fundamental feature of reality is the episode; by definition, a remarkable and dramatic event to the participant (Lofland and Lofland, 1984). In terms of young drivers, a most dramatic episode in their lives is an injury producing crash. We decided, therefore, to uncover the realities of young drivers who were involved in crashes. We endeavoured to "get to know" standardized forms of behaviour for such young drivers, so that we could see how they proceeded "normally" towards the crash and how young drivers' reality components related to the episode of the crash. To address young driver

involvement in car crashes, we needed a full comprehension of what young drivers said "went on out there", how they "interpreted what they saw", "what did and did not influence their behaviour" and "how they acted according to their interpretations".

BASIS FOR THE STUDY

The conceptual/philosophical basis for this study was found in Dilthey's Concept of Erfahrung (everyday experience) and Erlebnis (dramatic experience as per Lofland and Lofland's episode) grounded in Bergson's metaphysics. In short, Bergson distinguished two profoundly different ways of knowing a thing. The first, analysis, implies that we move around an object; the second, intuition, that we enter it (Bergson, 1949). For Dilthey (in Platinga, 1980), analysis refers to "Anschauung", or looking at outer objectifiable features, while intuition means "Erlebnis", or clarifying expressions of inner life.

Erlebnis, is the basic stratum (Grundlage) and the central substance (Kurnhafte Gehalt) of life (Palmer, 1969). It incorporates a person's view of self and the other as it relates to a dramatic life situation. It provides the traffic safety researchers with their material. To penetrate Erlebnis we need to use a process of understanding, to group the meaning of other persons' expressions of reality within a context. It involves an active process of interpretation (Platinga, 1980). For as Comte (in Truzzi, 1974) first established, no sociological description is complete until the conclusions of historical and statistical analyses are in harmony with the "laws of human nature". To do this we must understand our lived experience.

Lived experience, or Erfahrung, is a unity of meaning which reaches out and encompass both reflection of the past and anticipation of the future as it relates to an Erlebnis context. To pass on Erlebnis, people use spontaneous expressions (Ausdruck) that clarify its meaning. And, it is the inner meaning of life events as expressed by actors that deeply influences their actions (Giorgi, 1971).

Since "young drivers" is a dominant theme in our organization of accident reality, and we wish to understand their actions, it is necessary to grasp their reality as passed on through interviews. This provides us with the knowledge we need to vicariously understand the young drivers' experiences (Bruyn, 1966).

According to psychologists like Giorgi and Maslow, physicists like Bohr, De Broglie and Heisenberg and sociologists like Weber, Becker

and Gibson, we cannot assume that events can be best apprehended within the single perspective of measurement. The essential phenomenon lived and experienced by young drivers must be captured, otherwise, the young driver research loses much of its value.

We do not assume that young people's elaborations of the crash should stand for legal fact. Whether the accounts explicate the reality of the crash, gloss them over or distort them is irrelevant. This report is wholly concerned with what young people sincerely believed to be the actions and consequences.

METHODOLOGY

To arrive at the young drivers' Erlebnis of vehicle crashes, we engaged in intensive interviewing, described by Sanders (1976) as a conversation one might have with a person not seen for a long time. In such interviews the respondents' general answers such as "it's o.k.", "interesting" or "important" elicited further questions which pressed for concrete answers. If the interviewer met a respondent who was in fact vague and evasive, he probed enough to eventually find that the interviewee had only the vaguest sense of an answer to the question (Sanders, 1976).

The Questions

The open-ended questions used in this study evolved out of relevant philosophical, sociological and psychological literature. They were designed to be flexible, allowing for probing if necessary. Probing includes strategic inclusion of secondary questions which help clarify original answers and elicit further concerns or descriptions.

The questions were developed by the professional staff of the Traffic Safety Planning and Research Department, Insurance Corporation of British Columbia. They were designed to identify the young drivers' interpretations of self in the "Erlebnis" of a vehicle crash. The following questions formed the nucleus of the interviews:

A. THE ACCIDENT

1. Describe what went wrong just before the accident.
2. What was your first reaction? What else did you do?
3. If another vehicle was involved, what do you remember it doing which could have contributed to the accident?
4. What could you have done to avoid the accident?
5. If you were involved in the same sort of situation again, is there anything you would do differently?

6. Do you feel that your driver training and experience adequately prepared you to handle the situation immediately after the accident? How could you have been better prepared?
7. Do you think that with more training you could have avoided the accident?
8. What were your first thoughts after the accident?
9. Tell me, what are some things in life you worry about?

B. PRIOR EVENTS

1. What was going on in the car just before the accident? (Were you talking to a friend, listening to the radio, smoking or thinking about anything in particular?) Do you think this contributed to the eventual problem?
2. What was the purpose of your trip?
3. Were there passengers in your car? If yes, why were there passengers? If no, why were you alone?
4. Were your parents aware of what you were doing? How did they react when they found out about the accident?
5. What were you doing just before you got into the car?

C. EVENT CONTEXT

1. How do you get along with your parents? Did you talk with them before you left in the car? What did you talk about?
2. How do you get along with other people? For example, others at school, work, in your family, etc.?
3. Do you have a girlfriend/boyfriend? If they weren't in the car, did you see them just prior to taking the trip which ended in your accident? What did you talk about?
4. What kind of a day were you having before the accident?
5. Do you feel comfortable driving a car? What is it about driving that makes you feel most uncomfortable? Are you a cautious driver?
6. Did you feel comfortable driving on the day of your accident? For example, did you feel good, tense or what? Do you feel you were driving according to the weather/road conditions?

D. ROLE OF THE CAR

1. When did you get your driver's license?
2. What do you usually use the car for? Was the accident trip part of this pattern or was it a relatively unique event?

3. Before the accident, what did a car mean to you in your life? Has this changed since the accident? If so, how?
4. If you could have any car, what kind would you choose? Why would you choose this one?
5. Was it your own car, or somebody else's (i.e. your parents') which you were driving at the time of the accident?
6. Do you spend a lot of time working on (your) car? Why? (Hobby, excitement, etc.) Do you generally work alone or with friends?
7. How much time per day, on average, do you spend in your car?

E. LIFESTYLE AND SELF-IMAGE

1. How do you do at school or at work?
2. How do you think your friends see you? (Use a single phrase if possible to best describe this.) How would you describe yourself?
3. Do you often go to parties on weekends? Do you go alone, with a group of friends, with a boyfriend/girlfriend?
4. When at a party, do you drink alcohol?
5. When you go out, are you most often the driver or a passenger?
6. Have you had any driving tickets during the last two years?
7. If your friend has been drinking, do you still drive with him/her?

F. CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

1. If you were involved in a similar situation again, what would you do next time?
2. Overall, how were you treated by various officials?

The Interview: Flow of Events

The interviews were contracted to the Multidisciplinary Accident Investigation Team at the University of British Columbia. The team consisted of four interviewers and one project manager, under the supervision of a professor.

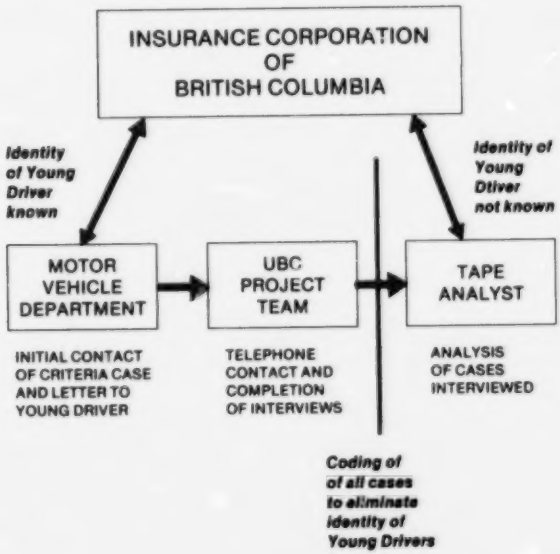
The initial identification of young drivers involved in automobile accidents was made through a search of the police automobile accident records, filed at the Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) headquarters in Victoria, British Columbia. All people involved in criteria cases were sent a letter from the Superintendent of MVD urging them to participate in the study (see Appendix A). Also enclosed was a letter from Professor

F.D. Navin, head of the Multidisciplinary Accident Investigation Team, to reassure participants that their identities would be held in strictest confidence (see Appendix B). Letters were sent to establish initial contact and to inform people that members of the project team would contact them in the near future to ask for their cooperation.

A copy of the Superintendent's letter to each potential subject was forwarded to the project team as an acknowledgement of contact. This copy was then used to contact all individuals and proceed with ethnographic interviews. Replies to all contacts were kept in a database to show the progress of the study. The driver's identity was not entered into the database. It was kept as a case number so **only** the UBC project team knew the driver's identity (Navin, et. al., 1985).

All completed taped interviews were delivered to a contracted data analyst on a weekly basis. Tapes were identified with a code to eliminate any connection between the tape and the person or accident from which it originated. At the earliest possible time the original correspondence was destroyed so that only edited taped interviews existed.

The interview followed the process illustrated below:


INSURANCE CORPORATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Identity of Young Driver known
Identity of Young Driver not known
MOTOR VEHICLE DEPARTMENT
UBC PROJECT TEAM
TAPE ANALYST
INITIAL CONTACT OF CRITERIA CASE AND LETTER TO YOUNG DRIVER
TELEPHONE CONTACT AND COMPLETION OF INTERVIEWS
ANALYSIS OF CASES INTERVIEWED
Coding of of all cases to eliminate identity of Young Drivers

INTERVIEW PROCESS

A Typical Interview: The Process

A typical interview included preparation for entry, negotiation of entry, entry, exit, and analysis.

Preparation For Entry

According to Schatzman and Strauss (1973) the success of any project is dependent on a thorough presentation of the study to key officials involved. Such consideration provides the researcher with important information about protocol, confidentiality of data from government agencies, people's authority and status, departmental routines and interest. Thorough presentation to key officials helps avoid potential embarrassments or surprises.

Following the preparation for entry principles, the Multidisciplinary Accident Investigation Team and the Traffic Safety Planning and Research Department sought and received formal consent for the study from the University of British Columbia Research and Ethics Committee, and the Minister of Transportation and Highways. Not only did the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles and the selected police detachments (Richmond, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Maple Ridge and Vancouver) approve the study, but they actively participated in it. In fact, all interviews indirectly or directly originated from them.

Once the project team received a criteria case from the Provincial Motor Vehicle Department, the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles followed up by writing the young driver a letter, urging him/her to participate in the study. Also enclosed was a letter from the project team professor reassuring the recipient that the interview would be held in strictest confidence. An official description of the coded case was provided by the police detachment.

Negotiation For Entry

Since people's privacy can be invaded by unknown researchers, any tactical error, blunder or social crudity can compromise the granting of permission for an interview (Junker, 1960). Potential interviewees, therefore, require an "account" – an introduction about the topic or topics covered, probable length of time required, promises of confidentiality and so forth.

Then, consistent with proper negotiating procedures, the project team member first gained consent from the young driver. He introduced himself by name and stated he was working for the University of British Columbia under contract to the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia. The interviewer stressed that:

1. Confidentiality would be enforced.
2. The interview required about 45 minutes.
3. The interview required 1 session.
4. The place of meeting was at the discretion of the interviewee.
5. There would be no repercussions or assessment of blame.

If an interview was agreed to, the person was asked for a brief description of the accident to ascertain if he/she was directly involved in the event. If the person was an innocent bystander, the case was not considered worth following.

The address of the person was checked with the letter to ensure the majority of interviews took place at the interviewees' homes. The interviewer then set a date for the interview and left a phone number with the subject in case he or she had questions or wanted to cancel an appointment.

If the subject did not agree to an interview, the interviewer asked for a reason, which was then recorded on the receipt. The case was subsequently filed in a no-go database with comments on why interviews were not obtained. On the average, two phone calls per interview were required, as it was not always possible to contact the young driver and receive his/her consent on the first phone call.

Entry

A key aspect of any interview is the establishment of confluence or co-constitution between the interviewer and interviewee (Rothe, 1979). The first step is making the interviewee feel comfortable that the interviewer has "shared knowledge" about young people and auto accidents, and that the interview is structured on a trustworthy basis.

With respect to this study, the interviewer, before setting out to an interview, phoned the subject to confirm that the person would still participate. Two interviews were usually scheduled on the same day to minimize the travel time per interview. The interviewers briefed themselves on each case before the interview by obtaining the "official" accident scenario from the police report.

Upon arrival at the subject's house the interviewer answered all questions by the subject and parents to reduce apprehension. The subject was then warmed-up with general talk as the interviewer picked a location to sit, eliminated all possible background noise, and placed the tape recorder as close to the subject as possible.

The interviewer started each tape in the presence of the subject with a confidentiality statement, the case number, and finally a brief "official version" of the accident taken from the police files. The interview then

proceeded with the interviewer verbalising all physical reactions of the subject so that they could be documented on tape.

Throughout the interview, the researchers depended upon elicitation procedures. They negotiated the right question at the right time. Leading questions were followed by, when deemed proper, secondary or follow-up clarification questions. Topic switching and answer extensions in the interview helped acquire maximum data because the young drivers were able to expand on conversation topics important to them. Some topic digression also facilitated optimal expressions by young people.

Throughout the interviews, the researchers used first line verification procedures by stating, "Are you saying that . . .", "Do you mean that . . ." or "Can I conclude that . . .". These procedures helped the interviewers become confident that they understood the meaning of what was said with little or no reinterpretation.

Exit

At the end of an interview, the subject was asked if he/she would like to add anything which was not covered in the interview. In addition, the interviewer gave the respondent a project team business card to help the young driver who wanted further contact with the interviewer.

Analysis

Identification of social processes and forms of social behaviour was the basis for analysis and interpretation. More precisely, relationships, social meanings, definitions of the crash, and social norms affecting the young driver and crash, were sought. They became the basis for making sense out of what happened (Palmer, 1969).

To establish such interpretations the analyst followed these steps:

1. A transcript was thoroughly read to appreciate the totality of the interview (average of 45 pages).
2. Each response to a question and supporting statement was documented on a card.
3. Key descriptive terms in each response were underlined.
4. The cards were sorted according to descriptive terms.
5. Each pile of cards was reviewed, for the establishment of categories, rules of interpretations, assumptions, norms, etc., which incorporated a number of terms.
6. The categories were transferred onto master data sheets.
7. Each response which reflected a certain category was rewritten onto the master data sheet.
8. Relationships were constructed.

To assure objectivity and analytic consistency one person analyzed the data according to a content analysis design, while a second person regularly spot-checked that data and compared his categorizations with those of the original analyst. This process contributed to consistency of categorizations.

To further assure that the analysis accurately reflected the young drivers' view of driving, three tests of validation originally formulated by Psathas but later revised by Rothe were considered:

Test One

1. Do the analyses faithfully reflect the experiences of young drivers who live in the situation?
2. Are the findings faithful representations, descriptions, accounts, or interpretations of what young drivers would themselves recognize to be true?

Test Two

Armed with 'only' the knowledge of young drivers gained from the description presented, would a reader be able to understand what was said when confronted with the actual life world reality of the events described?

Test Three

Can the reader become the player after having read the rules? (Rothe, 1982). Once we were able to portray important life events surrounding a crash, we wanted to proceed one step further and see if the events might be interrelated. We recognized that the relationships are one step removed from the essence of the event. However, having already attained a rich description, we decided to cross-tabulate a long series of categories to see whether certain new entities or patterns emerged.

FINDINGS

The findings are presented at the level of the most immediate conjuncture – the explanations actors gave of their own conduct. A textual format is used to describe interpretations of young drivers' common-sense rationales for actions, social relations, values, orientations and images of self. The findings are written to provide a composite ensemble retrieved from one hundred and thirty individuals. For readers interested in statistics, a series of cross-tabulations is

presented towards the end of the report. However, prior to a clarification of the ensemble, a description of the logistical setting is provided.

Logistics

Of the one hundred and thirty young drivers, aged sixteen to eighteen at the time of the crash, fifty-seven percent were boys and forty-three percent were girls.

In terms of gender differences, the clearest finding was that the female drivers were much more likely to be carrying passengers and, thus much less likely to be driving alone. Fully half of the male drivers were alone in the vehicle at the time of the accident and two-thirds of the accident-involved vehicles carrying two or more passengers were driven by females. The male drivers were associated with a higher percentage of angle (right-of-way) collisions than their female counterparts and two and a half times as many male as female drivers said they would do nothing differently should the same potential accident situation arise again. Male drivers were also two and a half times more likely to have received a speeding citation during the previous two year period.

Approximately one-third of the crashes occurred on weekday afternoons (Monday to Friday, 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.). The remaining crashes were almost evenly scattered on weekday mornings, evenings and nights, weekend evenings, nights and afternoons, and a few on weekend mornings. Overall, just over two-thirds of the crashes happened on weekdays. The majority of these accidents occurred during clear times with good visibility. These crash times parallel the provincial scene whereby 66% of all injury producing accidents involving young drivers 16 to 20 years old occur on weekdays up to 5 p.m. (Based on 1984 provincial Motor Vehicle Department date.)

Based on the descriptions of police accounts and/or interview data, nearly three-quarters of the accidents occurred at intersections. Of these, about one-third were controlled by signal lights. As might be expected, nearly all the crash events were located on asphalt paved roadways, most of which were dry.

The predominant type of crashes was a two-car front/side collision. Rear-enders "by" or "to" young drivers numbered about one- quarter of the total.

The logistics given are intended to help readers find their way through the features of accounts provided by young drivers.

Who Made What Mistakes?

Young drivers, like all people, tend to hold similar views about their identities. This is a pivotal point. For example, when they defined their role in the crashes they touched on their failings, but failings in relation to the other drivers, weather, etc. By relating their failings to other objects, the young drivers normalized the possibilities of blame, since in part, they were unable to change the course of affairs. However, their overall accounts of pre-crash events presented a series of patterns which shaped their realities at the time of the crash.

When young drivers were asked to describe "**What went wrong just before the accident**", they displayed the existential theme that consciousness is always of something. That is, the responses tended to function around "I" with reference to a situation or person. The object of consciousness was mostly the other driver. Descriptions implied that the crashes occurred as unwarranted intrusions of other drivers. In short, young drivers were driving normally; the other drivers were not.

Over two-thirds of the young drivers said that they were engaged in driving actions such as going forward with caution, passing with care, avoiding a problem on the road or just making a turn. In their own words:

1. I was just going forward.
2. Everything looked clear, so I started to proceed.
3. I was driving along and I went through the intersection.
4. I was just driving along when . . .
5. I was waiting for the light to turn green.
6. I looked behind me on a left turn.
7. Halfway into my turn this guy . . .

Correspondingly, while young drivers were driving normally, the other drivers were making unusual, sudden, unexpected or abnormal driving moves like making unsafe turns, non-signalling, rear-ending, slamming on brakes, weaving on the road, speeding, pulling out unsafely, not watching, passing illegally, turning suddenly or running a stop sign or traffic lights. To paraphrase young drivers:

1. Well this guy came through a red light . . . He just came out of nowhere.
2. He just pulled out to make a left turn.
3. He suddenly pulled out and turned.
4. There was a stop sign. I thought he was gonna stop but he didn't.
5. When he was passing, he was actually in my lane before I hit him.
6. The guy tried to pass me on the left.

7. He hit black ice and couldn't stop.
8. He was going faster than fifty.
9. His car weaved into my lane and hit me.

So, often the concept of blame, mistake, error or fault was transferred to the other drivers. This became a fundamental pattern, whereby the crash was constructed on the actions of other drivers impacting young drivers. The driving normality of others was called into question.

One group of young drivers, however, said that they were explicitly engaged in suspect behaviour that led to the crash. They admitted making mistakes in relation to other drivers and accepted fault. Prominent themes were lack of attention, misjudgements, speeding, playing games on the road and operating faulty equipment. Several excerpts are:

1. I was going around the corner too fast when I hit the gas pedal.
2. I was travelling too fast to stop in time.
3. I didn't brake fast enough, though I had time.
4. I didn't give myself enough time considering the conditions.
5. I wasn't paying attention to what was happening. I was distracted.
6. I didn't realize how close he was.
7. I was racing my friend when . . .
8. The brakes were funny in my vehicle. I wasn't quite used to them . . .

Some blame was transferred to conditions outside of the young drivers' realm of control. These responses were not seen as "real" mistakes. Young drivers just did not see, as in the following replies:

1. The sun was in my eyes so there was no way I could see him.
2. I didn't see anything. He just came out of nowhere.
3. Cars were parked so I couldn't see him clearly. I just didn't see him.
4. I just didn't see him.
5. I didn't see him coming at all.

The young drivers explicated the "seen-but- unnoticed" theme. Features of driving are seen as familiar, and commonplace, but they are not identified as circumstantial data that require on-going monitoring and attention. Like many of us, some young drivers treat driving as an ongoing event that requires little vigilance.

The question, "**What was going on just before the accident?**" was asked to document further young drivers' forms of behaviour leading to a crash. The most common response involved entertainment. About

half of the young drivers were either listening to the radio or to the tape cassette. Most of the answers included qualifiers which negated the "blame" element of possible inattention. For example, about three-quarters of the subjects who indicated that they were listening to the music, included such qualifiers as, "just listening", "I think I was", "nothing much, just listening" and "probably had radio on". These responses infer a meaning of inconsequential activity.

But, fifteen young drivers provided accounts that their driving was seriously influenced by music. Descriptors such as "loud" or "singing along" are found in the following lines:

1. I was listening to the radio and it was real loud.
2. I listened to the radio. I loved it.
3. I was singing along with the radio.
4. I sang along with the song on the radio.
5. I had the stereo on. I could've been thinking about the music.
6. I was listening to the radio and wasn't paying perfect attention when I made a turn.

Music is a much appreciated form of background or forefront entertainment. People play, interact and work by it. Yet, in an episodal drama like a crash, music can easily compete for the driver's attention.

Competition for attention also occurs when we drive with passengers. There is always an invitation to address them, to break from the pre-occupation of driving and socialize. So it is with young drivers. We established that just over half of young drivers had one or more passengers. The major reason given for having passengers was that young drivers liked doing things with friends such as giving rides, going out, visiting, partying, dating and going to/coming from school.

It is not surprising, therefore, that about one-third of the young drivers were talking with passengers immediately prior to the crash. However, young drivers, without prompting from interviewers, categorized their talk with passengers as either background or featured. Ordinary talk understood to be going on in cars, was portrayed by comments as:

1. Just what normal people do . . . talk.
2. I was probably talking to my sister.
3. I might've been talking a bit.
4. I had a conversation with my friend but it certainly wasn't wild.
5. Oh, I had intermittent conversation with my parents.

The above answers indicated the degree of interaction and, at times, the relationship between drivers and interactants (parents, sister, friend).

Such behaviour per se reflects the structure of social situations whereby each attendant is a potential interactant. However, in our society the structure of interaction is significantly influenced by the physical and social locale, whether it be whispers in a library, loud exchanges in a bar, quick answers on a production line, or chants in a church.

The vehicle as a social environment has no formal norms of interaction between drivers and passengers. From the perspective of safety, the predominant rule for drivers should be that driving attention is top priority; social discourse is secondary. If the order is reversed, the potential for disaster increases. The following descriptions illustrate how the reverse of the rule contributed to an unwelcome scenario:

1. My friends and I were talking . . . I was trying to get them to come down and look at my house. Before I knew it . . .
2. I was distracted by talking with my friend.
3. My friends and I were talking, laughing and stuff. Guess we shouldn't've.
4. My buddy and I were talking about riding motorbikes. Then . . .

Of forty cases, four young drivers definitively linked talking with passengers to the crash. Another three respondents suggested an influence with answers containing descriptors like "a little bit", "maybe" and "somewhat".

It is often assumed that drivers without passengers have a greater chance of concentrating on the task of driving. The logical outcome would be a greater number of safe trips. Not so! Many of the drivers who were alone in the vehicle concentrated on things totally unrelated to driving. They described how they thought about past events such as frustration over a test or a poor day at work, upcoming scenes like getting home, going to sleep or visiting a girlfriend and general life circumstances. These thoughts illustrate the existential thesis that a person is both here and there; here in body but there in mind.

Other single driver activities which distracted them: looking for specific addresses, seeing acquaintances on the sidewalk or looking for items in the car, eating, drinking or smoking or cleaning the windows. Some young drivers elaborated on how other activities overshadowed driving, resulting in misfortune.

Further responses suggesting a potential or real link between goings-on in the car and the crash were:

1. I: Do you think that listening to the radio or just talking to your friends could have led to the accident?
   R: Yes . . . because you're listening to them and it's . . . you sort of . . . you test them . . . so, when they say . . . when

. . . you're sort of talking to them and you're looking both ways and they go . . . O.K. go . . . usually you kind of . . . you know you look . . . but in this case, the person said oh, you can go . . . and I thought, yeah, I can go, but . . . I think otherwise maybe I would've waited but I'm not sure, but I think I would've if no one had said anything and so, if I didn't have anyone there to talk to, I don't know . . . maybe I would've thought a bit.

2. I: Do you usually play your stereo loud?
   R: Oh no, medium.
   I: Do you think that would've contributed to the problem?
   R: Could've, could've been thinking about that (music).
3. R: The radio was probably on . . . it's usually on.
   I: Do you think this probably contributed to the accident?
   R: A bit yeah . . . distracted me a bit.
4. R: I half pay attention to them (passengers) . . . when I'm driving . . . like cause he does decide to argue with her and they end up in a fist fight . . . you have to keep them on each seat.
5. R: Passenger: She (driver) was searching through her bag cause she had her head down and she was looking through for some books or something. The only thing I remember saying to her was to hold on and she looked up and saw what was happening.
6. R: Just driving . . . had a cigarette . . . had the radio on and probably talking to my friend and that was about it.
   I: Do you think this might've contributed to the eventual problem?
   R: Uh, it could've . . . yeah, driving maybe with undue care and attention, that could've been a bit of a reason, yeah.
7. R: I was listening to it (radio) . . . I might've looked at it . . . I wasn't changing it but I looked at it.
   I: You were watching the radio?
   R: Not much, you know, some times . . . but when I looked up still I had lots of time . . . like it might've been less time than I would've had further back but I still had lots of time to stop.
8. R: Actually, I think I was . . . it was a steady thought in my head . . . I wasn't actually concentrating on it . . . where you wrinkle your forehead and that . . . but I was . . . it was there . . . I kept thinking that . . . uh, another thing I thought, I had to feed the dog when I got home . . . I

remember what I thought actually really well . . . it's . . . I'm amazed . . . I'm a thought person, though, I'm always thinking to myself . . . so that might've upset me a little.

When young drivers were asked whether they were driving according to the weather and road conditions at the time of the crash the majority answered "yes". They also gave some description of the context:

1. . . . doing speed limit and watching carefully.
2. Yeah, it was a sunny day out.
3. Yeah, it was busy.
4. Yeah, it was dry out.
5. Yeah, it was raining and everything. Everybody was going the speed limit.
6. Nice road conditions.

Just over ten percent of young drivers stated unequivocally that they were not driving according to the conditions at the time. They should have slowed down given the driving conditions at the time. In the words of several interviewees:

1. I went too fast for the rain.
2. I could've gone slower on a wet night.
3. No. The sun was glaring. I should've slowed down.

Since only one third of young drivers suggested that they were concentrating on the road and/or traffic, we may ask, "If only one-third of the young drivers were paying attention to the road, why is it that the majority of respondents assigned the blame for the crash to the other driver?" The answer may lie in the thesis that young drivers, like other people, normalize their behaviour according to their beliefs, feelings, understandings, hopes, values and perceptions. They have internal perceptions which determine how they routinely act and interpret. So many young drivers engage in socially accepted activities such as listening to music, talking to friends or thinking about life events, that they consider these activities routine. They do not see this kind of behavior as something which might contribute to a car crash.

Doing Things Differently Next Time

Although the majority of young drivers said that the other driver or weather conditions were totally or partially to blame, when asked, **"What could you have done to avoid the accident?"** most of them felt they could have taken preventive actions. One action involved the physical movement of the vehicle by braking or slowing down, swerving

or moving the car to a different location. Of note, the possible avoidance measures were given in degrees of certainty. To illustrate the theme, several representative quotes are presented:

1. I don't know. Maybe if I'd gone a bit slower . . . I wasn't going that fast though.
2. I guess I could've come up to the . . . come up to it (stop sign) and come to a dead stop.
3. Maybe if I'd swerved a little more and been farther behind her.
4. I should've just swerved around it (other car).
5. Maybe if I didn't pull to the side of the road.
6. I could've changed lanes.
7. If I braked as hard as I could and ah, well, just tried to get out of the way. Just if I would've braked as hard as I could.

Some young drivers focussed on the attention factor. Twelve respondents believed they could have avoided the crash if they had concentrated more on the road, the other driver or simply driving. These young people reasoned-through an action which they believed was unsanctioned, because they failed to pay enough attention to driving.

Not surprisingly, a third of the respondents stated that there was nothing they could have done to avoid their mishaps. They reasoned that the other driver was responsible for the accident. Their own driving behaviour was not called into question. Further, some of these young drivers believed that their in-car activities just prior to the accident were not open to censure. They assigned blame to something tangible such as the other driver or weather. Inattention, music or social interaction might be considered intangibles, removed from the force of cause or blame. Therefore, it is natural to assume that the accident could have been avoided with changed driving behaviour by the other driver.

A follow-up question presented to the respondents was, "**If you were involved in the same sort of situation again, is there anything you would do differently?**" Overall, fifty interviewees touched on taking different driving actions such as slowing down, braking, stopping, changing the position of the vehicle, waiting, and being more cautious. Some of the answers were not restricted to describing opportunities for alternative action, but they included obligations to do so. That is, the "I could" turned to "I would". Such statements have increased perlocutionary force (Sebeok, 1975), projecting a possible future state of affairs of consequence. Social researchers, educators, policymakers and others are gratified by such statements because they reaffirm the smooth functioning of the driving public. Young drivers, after all, seem to recognize the consequences of certain behaviours. They have become,

or are on the way to becoming, competent social actors while in an automobile. To illustrate better this interpretation, a number of examples are offered:

1. Instead of hitting him, I'd find a way out. I would've really stayed quite a ways back, stay well back from any other vehicle.
2. I'd give myself more time and waited for the traffic to be totally gone.
3. I would . . . a . . . I don't think I would've come out as much . . . and uhm . . . well, now I think about it now, when I'm . . . doing left-hand turns, I don't come out as much and I don't turn . . . until I know I know for sure . . .
4. Uh . . . well, I would slow down . . . not go so fast . . . on a hill, cause it's a school district, I know that now.
5. I'd wait till I could see everything perfectly.
6. I wouldn't follow so close.

The force of perlocutionary acts was also evident in the performative (present first person expression of something) responses concerning attention. A cluster of twenty-seven young drivers focussed on being more observant, perceptive and attentive. As the respondents said:

1. I'd kept my eyes on the road.
2. I'd keep watching him (other driver) longer.
3. I would look in my rear view mirror.
4. I guess it really matters on the circumstances. I'm like . . . I'm a little wary now.
5. I don't really know actually . . . I just . . . probably try not to freak out so bad, if I got hit . . . but I suppose I could've kept watching him longer . . . to see what he did . . . cause like my mom was saying, you can't second guess the other drivers . . . and so, I guess that's what I did cause I just kept saying that he would stop cause the light was yellow and he was far enough away to stop, so . . . I just assumed that he would . . . so, I just was watching my turn and then uhm . . . got snooked, but I guess if I kept watching him a little bit longer . . .
6. R: I don't really know. Like I wear my seat belt.
   I: Oh you weren't wearing it?
   R: I wasn't wearing one, so . . . I do now.
   I: I guess, yeah.
   R: So, I'm wearing a seat belt, and . . . uhm, I really, you know, there's nothing else I could do that I know of.

7. R: You don't really think it's gonna happen. You always have to be prepared. Now I'm more concentrating on the road.
8. R: Slow down . . . Like watching everything, like when you stop for the light and you're the first person at the light, and you look both ways 'cause people run red lights.
9. R: Uhm . . . I'd probably go slower along the road and expect . . . like expect . . . I don't know . . . kind of be ready for it this time.
   I: More or less keep your eyes open a little more?
   R: Yeah, every time I go down the road now, I always slow down and make sure there's no one coming down the road.

A review of the sample answers shows a significant difference. Whereas the first three denote "I would", the latter three are "I am", suggesting that some young drivers have stepped beyond "I would" to "I am already doing so". The crash was a benchmark for changed behaviour. From a social management perspective, the latter behaviours are preferred and welcomed.

Consistent with the "other driver blame theme" are thirty-two young drivers who stated that if they were involved in similar circumstances there is either nothing they would do otherwise, or that they could do. The answers implied that the crash circumstances could not be changed by the actions of the young drivers. To illustrate:

1. I couldn't do anything different.
2. It would probably happen the same way.
3. It'd be the same thing cause it couldn't be avoided.
4. There's not much I'd do other than I did.
5. I would've done the same thing.

Seen from the young drivers' points of view, their commitment to changed behaviour in similar circumstances is subscribed by "near fatalism". The accident would happen anyway; there is not much that one can do. As one young driver stated, "If it happened again tomorrow, it'd probably happen again."

Further expansion of the issue of accident avoidance included the question, "**Do you think that with more training, you could have avoided the accident?**" The most representative account to the question was "no". Selected cases implied accident avoidance was not a formal component of training but, rather, a feature of driving experience or common sense.

However, most of the young drivers explained that they lacked the experience and training to handle the post-crash situation. "Towing

procedures", "witnesses", "information gathering" and "insurance company contact" were some examples of post-accident events, in which young drivers felt insecure. As a group, the events represent administrative procedures. It appeared that many young drivers lacked knowledge about the full range of functional/legal imperatives related to a crash.

Three quintessential formal organizations that impact on young drivers' post-crash events in British Columbia are the police, Insurance Corporation of British Columbia and health care. When young drivers were asked how they were treated by various officials, a noticeable aspect of negative comments was that young drivers disagreed with an official's interpretation about a significant aspect of the crash. Lack of young drivers' understanding about officials' roles and duties may have led to the following descriptions:

1. I wasn't impressed with the policeman. He assumed it was my fault. I was young.
2. They think they (the police) have to search you because of your age.
3. I argued with the claims adjuster about the worth of the car.
4. I had a bit of a hassle cause I didn't have the information right there.
5. They asked too many questions that drive me nuts. They're no good. They try to put things in your head that didn't exist.

Although the meanings of the above statements vary, it appears that young drivers' lack experience and understanding of post-accident events as they involve certain authorities. (Further clarification of young drivers' treatment by officials is on page 59.)

Post–Crash – First Reactions

A vehicle crash is a remarkable and dramatic event for driving participants. Their behaviour after the episode helps us determine how young drivers respond to conditions of strain.

"What was your first thought after the crash?" The crash has occurred, now what? What did you want to do first? What was your first reaction?

Young driver accounts of circumstances presented distinctive themes. The most prominent one was "co-existence with contemporaries", which were either other drivers, passengers, or both. In short, young drivers' first reactions were concerns for the other drivers, passengers and/or both. Concern was defined along a spectrum. At one end was thought and worry and at the other end was action. For example:

1. I was just worried about the other driver.
2. I was worried about how the other person was.
3. I was worried. So, I ran out to make sure everyone in the other car was all right.
4. I thought, Oh my God, I hope he's all right, so, I went to see how he was.
5. I made sure everyone else is all right.
6. I thought, oh no, the people in the back of my car.
7. I walked over to see if my friend was O.K.

While a group of young drivers expressed concern, others took action by making sure that those involved in the accident were all right.

A second group of young drivers identified their first reactions as fright. Thirteen out of the twenty-four cases answered that they were afraid of possible or probable parent reactions. More specifically, much of the fright was over the possibility of disciplinary actions by parents:

1. Dad's gonna kill me. He told me to be careful.
2. Oh my God . . . My parents will really be mad . . . And a new car.
3. My parents are gonna kill me. It was their car.

A third emotional reaction could be classed as outbursts. Young drivers, much in tune with the existential moment of "destructibility" described how their post accident reactions produced enraged, hysterical, angry outbursts. Comments like:

1. I went hysterical,
2. I felt like yelling,
3. I started screaming at the lady behind me,
4. I was shaking, I was so mad,
5. I screamed. There was nothing else I would do,
6. I was angry and swore,
7. Well, like I said, just mad. There's a couple of words for it, but I got out and kicked the tire,

illustrate expressions of aggression. An extended version of an aggressive outburst is:

> I was mad . . . 'cause I didn't . . . I . . . I . . . 'cause I asked the guy . . . I said what're you doing? You didn't stop at the stop sign . . . he's sitting there bitchin'.
> . . . . It was my dad's truck and so I was kinda worried about that, that's why I was mad.

As is borne out in social psychology research, people who have suffered a situation of failure and/or anxiety may develop aggressiveness in the forms of anger and rage, verbal attacks and even actual physical violence (Krech, et al, 1962).

Further proof that people react differently to an episodal misadventure, were the comments of thirteen young interviewees who described their immediate post reactions as "shock". Shock was desribed in degrees, from "really" to "quite" shocked. Consider the following descriptive account:

> I was worried for the . . . the guy I hit . . . I thought maybe he was . . . like you could see blood on the side of his window when we stopped and . . . you could see him . . . it was like slow motion, you could see him hitting the window and then falling down . . . so, when I went in . . . he was just lying there on his seat and you couldn't see him and I just was like in shock I couldn't believe this happened . . .

To further accent that the post-crash reality is one of high emotions and aggression, an expanded illustration extracted from an interview is offered:

R: I was freaked out about the car more than anything because it was my mom's car and I was actually going where I wasn't supposed to be . . . cause she gave me the car to go to (____) to pick up some draperies for her . . . and my friend and I were going into (_____) to pick up another friend to take with us . . . and so I was kind of going where I wasn't supposed to and I had a feeling on the way there that . . . I had this feeling but it just said . . . I don't know if you should do this . . . but I went and then I had another thought that I should put my seat belt on, but then I never wear my seat belt . . . so . . . I didn't . . . it's uncomfortable . . . and I told my friend . . . I told her to put her seat back because her seat was forward and I said "put your seat back" . . . and she said "why" and I said "because you might hit your head on the windshield if I have an accident" . . . it was weird . . . 'cause I said something and before we left my house, we left her car here and I put . . . I gave . . . we were just gonna take the keys but I gave the keys to my mom and I said just have the keys in case you need the car . . .

I: You went into shock? What . . . what exactly did you feel?

R: I kept apologizing over, and over, and over and over and over for her car, and I gave her my driver's license . . . and I said

I don't wanna see that for six months . . . and I thought that (tape cuts off) . . . I thought she was hurt more because . . . I was just freakin right out and was . . . they took her over to the church and called the ambulance for her and I had to stay by the accident and the firemen told me to get in the fire truck and I couldn't get in the truck 'cause it was so high . . . and I just . . . I couldn't get in the truck and someone came by and said get in the truck and I turned around and screamed at him . . . I can't get in the truck . . . and they go . . . it's O.K., it's O.K. it's only a car in the middle . . . it's only my mom's car . . . and I was just freaking cause it was my mom's car . . . and then . . . I was talking to the cop . . . and . . . car again . . . and then . . . I screamed at anybody that asked me questions . . . I just turned around and screamed at them . . . I don't usually do that . . . and, uhm . . . then . . . uhm . . . the cop . . . the cops and the firemen pushed the car to the side of the road and asked me to start it and I started it 'cause they wanted me to see if I could drive the car home and I said that I could, and they go, are you sure . . . and I said, yes, I can drive it home . . . I'm driving it home cause I had no one to tow it home . . . oh, no not this . . . and so I started it and I didn't need to put the clutch in to start it . . . just turned over but then it started smokin' . . . and you could smell transmission and everything . . . and the cop goes . . . oh, you can't drive it and everything . . . and I go, yes, I can . . . I'm driving . . . he's going . . . get out of that car . . . I'm gonna drive you home . . . turn it off . . . so I turned it off . . . cause it was smokin real bad . . . but that's the only time I didn't know what I was talking about . . . there was no way I could've driven it home . . .

This segment illustrates the richness of description some young drivers attached to the post accident reaction. Their self-assurance was shattered, leading to a mixture of frustration and aggression.

For some young drivers the first reaction was a question or an expression of doubt, disbelief. The crash was an ambiguous event, one which young drivers questioned. The following statements demonstrate more clearly the young drivers' apprehension:

1. I couldn't believe that it happened.
2. I felt stupid. I couldn't believe it was me.
3. I thought what the hell? Just happened.
4. Why did it happen? Why to me?
5. I was wondering what happened.

Disbelief tended to be demarcated by two issues: the crash event and the young driver's involvement in the event. Both issues were distinguished by uneasiness, a reluctance to accept the fact that the interviewees were involved in a consequential crash.

Why Were You On The Road?

Driving is an activity with purpose. The driver's purpose is to arrive at a destination, or to pass time, cruise, etc. From a phenomenological perspective, such purposes are "in-order-to" intents, which are integral parts of social action. Therefore, the intents are key devices for establishing the extent to which respondents' trips were common or unique.

Reasons for driving can be integrated into systems of everyday experiences. Based on the data, the most common systems were: coming/going from special events, visiting acquaintances, going to/coming from work, going shopping, giving rides and going to/coming from appointments.

For this study, special events include such engagements as formal dinners, professional sports events (e.g. hockey and football), parties, movies, gatherings (non-party) and personal sports or recreational activities such as dance lessons or car rallies. Nineteen young drivers were either going to or coming from occasions characteristic of recreation. For example:

1. I was coming home from motorbike riding.
2. I came back from working out in the gym.
3. I went to see a tractor pull show.
4. I was coming from a football game.
5. I was coming back from a sporting event.

Further, seventeen young drivers were either coming from or travelling to visits with acquaintances such as boyfriends/girlfriends, family members (e.g. coffee with sister) or friends. Their plans were disrupted by the crash.

Other purposes for the ill-fated trips could be considered practical engagements. That is, young drivers were driving in the course of practical or routine events such as going to/from work, going to/from school, going shopping, attending "official visits" (e.g. doctor or court appointments), picking up objects (e.g. packs, jackets, newspapers) and giving acquaintances rides (e.g. patient from hospital, babysitter from work, mother to work). The conventional use of the automobile in practical situations received half of young driver responses. This

segment of young driver crashes were disruptions of trips during midweek afternoon to evening times.

As mentioned on page 15, just over half of the young drivers reported that there was one or more passengers in their vehicles. The major reason for carrying passengers was because drivers liked to do things with friends. Giving rides, going out, visiting, dating and going to school, means doing things with friends. With few exceptions, the crashes involving passengers happened during recreational trips.

Going to or coming from work, picking up things and buying odds and ends from nearby stores may be described as general reasons for car trips made by a single driver. In today's society, close observation of driver-only cars during weekday traffic times shows this to be a general observable pattern.

A follow-up to the purpose of the trip was a question asking young drivers **whether the ill-fated trip was part of a usual pattern of car usage or whether it was unique**. Three-quarters of the respondents considered their reasons for driving to be typical. Some said:

1. Yeah, I usually drive my girlfriend home.
2. It was a regular work routine. You know I do deliveries.
3. Yeah, I give people rides a lot.
4. Going out to different places. That's usual.
5. Oh yeah, I take it out to a mall . . . I have before . . . take it out to get jeans or something.

However, one-quarter of the interviewees considered the crash-resulting trip unusual. For example:

1. Only run an errand once before to the same place . . . I only done it once before so it was kind of unique. But it's the same route I use there and back. It was just for a different thing that's all.
2. Unique. I usually don't go down that street.
3. Unusual. I don't usually go to a movie with a car.
4. Unique. I'm usually not on the road at 2:30 in the morning. Usually I'm home a lot earlier.
5. No, this was the first time driving at night.
6. I had an appointment which I had never taken a car before.

The rule for uniqueness of the trip was based on the use of car for a specific event, the time the car was driven, or the location to which the car was driven. Such irregularities may have required driving corrections which the young drivers hesitated to take. This thesis is based on the anthropological/psychological belief that the consistency of actions is dependent on people's dispositions to patterns of experience.

Some young drivers, therefore, by being in unusual events, may have lacked the disposition to respond in characteristic ways to new situations.

To arrive at a definition of what young drivers usually use the car for, a question about "main use" was posed. As could be expected, drivers' main usage of a vehicle varied widely with each use representing a significant descriptive category. Work-related use of the car (part-time and full-time work) was most often mentioned, followed closely by use for school and pleasure. Regular use of the car for attending special events, shopping, general driving and doing errands was not as prominent. With such a wide gamut of automobile usage, we may assume that the majority of the accidents occurred as part of patterned use. This proved to be the case. Further, many of the unusual driving events were defined more on the basis of time and routes than events.

Activities Before The Trip

Episodes of high drama occur in a context which moves beyond the specific time and location. Intense or consuming relationships, anxious moments, emotionally charged experiences, petty jealousies, moods of depression, heartfelt joy and pleasure-filled scenes may be recaptured by persons as they participate in later activities. Perhaps it is appropriate to say that, "for better and for worse, individuals are influenced by what 'has been'." Philosophers such as Heidegger (1962), Kockelmans (1965) and Stern (1967) have written eloquently about the theme reported in Rothe:

> What is called the past is something which once was present to me, regarded as past from the standpoint of my now, but still retained by such memory (Rothe, 1979; 83).

We would emphasize, therefore, that actions at any time are influenced by not only past actions, but also by one's valuation of the immediate past. Moods, for example are often determined by what has just happened. Once formed, they then contribute to one's behaviour.

When young drivers were asked to describe "**the kind of day they were having before the accident**", the responses indicated broad interpretations of usual and unusual. For example, three-quarters of the young drivers said, at the general level, that the day was usual. The character of the day leading to the crash was described as "good", "pretty good", "fine", "average", "normal", "usual", "O.K.", "nothing special" and "fair". Some young drivers elaborated:

1. R: Nothing special . . . nothing really horrible . . .
   I: Yeah.
   R: Average day to day.
   I: An average day?
   R: Yeah . . . well, it hadn't really gotten rolling yet cause all I'd done was work and go to school.
   I: Right.
   R: Kind of average.
2. R: Day? . . . uhm, normal school day . . . like . . . school's no big downer for me or anything so it was just . . . a normal day . . . I never, you know . . .
   I: O.K.
   R: Like nothing . . . there was nothing . . . oh, it's a bad day and . . . nothing.
3. R: Uh, it was alright . . .
   I: Yeah?
   R: I had been up for about an hour and half, I guess . . .
   I: On what scale compared to others?
   R: About the same . . . just average day.
4. R: It was a sunny day . . . it was kind of . . . still pretty warm out there . . . late September.
   I: Was it a Friday, weekend, or?
   R: I think it was a Wednesday, pretty good day.
5. R: As far as I can remember, it was an O.K. day . . . uhm, I didn't have school that day, so . . . I'd just been kinda bummin' . . . bummin' around all day.
6. R: It was probably just a normal average day every day . . . there was nothing . . . didn't have fights with anybody I don't think.

A relevant theme demonstrated in the quotes was that some young drivers normalized their days not so much by what happened, but by what did not happen. Both structures were deemed worthy of reporting. Similarly, a normal or O.K. day was not guided by any specific features which may influence further behaviour. It was one based on regularity; incidents were not generally worth reporting. The probability that the crash caused a re-evaluation of the day goes without saying:

> Well, especially bad because of the accident, but besides that . . . uhm . . . no, nothing in particular . . . it's not exceptionally good . . . but I don't remember any exceptionally bad . . . except of course the accident.

Further general descriptions were:

1. Ordinary, nothing spectacular.
2. Like any other day.
3. Not a bad day, basically work, sat around, had dinner and visited my grandparents.
4. Fair day, on and off stuff.
5. Average morning.
6. Just a school day.
7. Wasn't a bad day or anything.

Particular days which were worth remembering were based on non-standard events. Something happened worth mentioning. The rules of memorable events tended to be based on highlights (positive events), emotions, unusualness or lowlights (negative events). About one-quarter of young drivers experienced such days prior to their crashes.

The construction of highlights was revealed in the following answers:

1. Yeah, it was a pretty good day . . . I had, I had a field hockey game that day.
2. Great, I felt great. Our team won the football game.
3. I was having fun . . . having a party.
4. Good day. I just passed my test.
5. Nice. I was going to visit my sister. That's always kind of exciting.
6. Just finished a road rally. Did O.K. . . . Was good.
7. I think I just gotten my truck not too long ago and I think my spirits were fairly high and that I was always thinking about it.

Memorable days consisted of achievements (passing a test, doing well in an activity), enjoyment over, for example, having a party or winning a football game and a projection of good times ahead. The past was related directly to the future. However, the crash changed the feeling.

In contrast to highlight days were lowlight days. These days were remembered because of something negative, even terrible. For example:

1. Geez, my car was stolen.
2. My house was robbed and I was shot in the arm.
3. I hurt my ankle in a game. Tennis.

On top of these events came the crash. Emotional days were also described in accordance with the highlight/lowlight structure. Situations described were:

1. I was kinda tense that day. Had four exams coming up.
2. Extremely upset. My girlfriend had a new boyfriend.

3. I was worked-up because of the game.
4. I was under some stress from school.

People's states of emotion are often accompanied by a general disorganization of cognitive processes. According to psychologists, Kretch et al (1962) and Bogdanoff (1961), individuals are rendered less capable of making cool, considered, rational judgements. Young drivers' highlights and lowlights certainly aroused emotions, which theoretically may have later contributed to heightened susceptibility to a crash.

Unusual days may also have resulted in heightened emotions or exhausting physical states. The following young driver comments clarify this description:

1. It was really . . . like an errand type of day. Do this, do that, go there.
2. Hectic, real hectic. It was the first day of school.
3. Tired. It was my third day at work.
4. Pretty hectic. My aunt just died that day.
5. Exhausting. Just a real long day . . . six in the morning to eleven at night. Go, go, go.

Such days create the circumstantial, emotional and physical past which may have influenced, either implicitly or explicitly, the crash event. An expanded response pertaining to this linkage was:

> I didn't have too much patience . . . because I was . . . because I was wanting to get home pretty badly and . . . it might've contributed to my . . . like well . . . because although I didn't pull out fast, I was still in a hurry to get home and since I didn't want to get caught in a traffic jam on the main highway . . . it made me want to turn left instead.

To arrive at the more immediate past and its possible influence to the crash, young drivers were asked **what they were doing before they entered their vehicle**. We were interested in unveiling links between pre-trip activities and the crash. A careful review of the data uncovered such activities as family/domestic, recreation/entertainment, visitation/interchange, work/employment, and school.

One-quarter of the young drivers stated that, just before entering the vehicle, they engaged in family/domestic activities such as drinking coffee, talking to family members, eating, cleaning-up or relaxing. The data revealed the following key supporting phrases:

1. Just had lunch.
2. Just having supper.

3. Gotten up and had coffee.
4. Had breakfast.
5. Finished off my lunch.
6. Was just talking to my sister at home.
7. Just been talking to my parents, then left.
8. Just finished washing dishes.
9. Sitting around.
10. I was sitting at home probably on the phone . . . I can't remember who it was.

Some of the recreation/entertainment activities like watching television, reading books or listening to music also occurred at home. However, other activities were more energetic, non-home based ones. For example, several young drivers had just finished swimming, dirt biking, car rallying, attending sport events, working out or dancing.

Visiting/social interchange between young drivers and friends was another relevant pre-trip occurrence. For example:

1. I was at my friend's house, probably playing pool. Then I decided to go out and look for my girlfriend.
2. We were just sitting around there listening to music . . . we just deciding what to do and then his mother called and said she had these papers.
3. I was at my friend's house watching a football game and stuff.
4. I was at my friend's house. We were eating chips.
5. I was talking to my boyfriend about when he was gonna meet me.

Less frequent yet still relevant were the pre-trip events linked to work. Young drivers were either coming from work or were working at the time of the crash. Two clarifications are:

1. I: So you had come home right after work.
   R: Uhm . . . Yeah, it was . . . like you get . . . like I work . . . I load the trucks . . . so you get a little bit tense.

2. It was . . . it was beginning of work . . . it was about 20 minutes after five and I started at five, as soon as I got there they said, O.K. you have a delivery, so . . .

At times interviewee's statements revealed feelings about work from which aftereffects could be inferred. Being tired, on edge, happy or upset because of work was sometimes transferred to driving. This did not occur so much with school related pre-trip activities. Here, the qualifier "just" was often used, indicating no special or possible further effects:

1. I was just in school.
2. Just came from school studying.
3. I just got my marks from school.
4. I finished the last class of the day.

To obtain a more specific relationship among events of the day, feelings and driving, a question asked of the young drivers was: "**Did you feel comfortable driving on the day of your accident?**" One hundred and nine interviewees answered yes, but by degree.

1. Yeah . . . just normal, I guess . . . just thinking about the day ahead of me.
2. Yeah wasn't bad . . . I probably had better days.
3. Yeah, yeah . . . like I wasn't . . . like that's what really surprised me . . . like when the accident occurred because I wasn't playing around . . . I was just quite relaxed . . . like I was mellow about it.
4. Oh yeah, I do it for a living, so . . . deliver pizzas.
5. Well, I remember not feeling too well, so . . . I'm not quite sure but . . . like totally . . . like when I drive I usually do enjoy it unless it's something I don't like doing . . .
6. Yeah. Might've been too comfortable. The day was over . . . became relaxed I guess.
7. As a driver, yeah, I kind of felt that the car was my domain, and I was sort of God in the car and that nothing, you know, sure there were obstacles in the way but I would get around them because I had this car . . .
8. Oh yeah, I always do . . . I'm always comfortable when I drive . . . relaxed . . .
9. Yeah, but I might've been a little upset (argument with boyfriend)
10. Pretty much . . . I get used to it . . . I wear my ski jacket all the time (cold weather).
11. Uhm yeah, I was just thinking, thinking about things you know.

Throughout the interviews young drivers who touched on being comfortable driving that fateful day, described their comfort by degrees. Some were always comfortable, too comfortable, comfortable . . . but, and somewhat comfortable. A further delineation of comfort showed that a group of young drivers felt comfortable because of the weather, road conditions, kind of day or mood. Several abbreviated samples are:

1. Felt fine like any other day.
2. Good day. Good mood.
3. Good night for driving. The roads were nice and dry.

4. Sun was shining. Great.
5. It was still light out and dry.

Fifteen percent of the young drivers explicitly stated that they did not feel comfortable driving that fateful day. Sample statements are:

1. No, you don't feel comfortable when your trany's making all sorts of noises and you can't see out of the windshield. You don't know what's wrong with your car next. What else is gonna happen . . . a wheel falls off or something. I was probably a little tense.
2. I think I was a bit shaky, because I'd just gotten my licence and everything.
3. When I . . . like I said when I got three or four blocks away I didn't feel very comfortable. I felt angry . . . I don't normally get in a car when I'm mad . . . say have an argument with my parents or something like that.
4. I was a little uncomfortable at the time because of the weather conditions. I was a bit nervous.
5. I was relaxed and tired and . . . when you're tired you haven't . . . attitude . . . say you get too relaxed. I was just more or less concentrating on getting home.
6. I was a bit on edge. So . . .

Based on the examples and other accounts found in the data, emotional states of some young people tended to make them uncomfortable drivers during the day of the crash.

Further evidence of discomfort could be suggested from another ten percent of the interviewees who stated that they were not totally comfortable driving for a variety of reasons. Although they stated that their feelings were not serious, they were still relevant or significant enough to be volunteered in the answers:

1. I was nervous because of grad. But still it was O.K.
2. I was with a couple of friends . . . fairly comfortable.
3. After three or four blocks, I wasn't angry any more.

Did you speak to either a girlfriend or boyfriend of the opposite sex just before the trip? The number of young males who had girlfriends and females who had boyfriends numbered about fifty percent. Fifteen young drivers spoke with their girlfriends or boyfriends just before the accident about general things. They said, "Yeah I talked to her before I left", "Yeah before I went to work", or "Talked to her at school".

Some more expanded answers were:

1. I would've seen her . . . at 3 o'clock . . . was the last time . . . It would've just been at school, you know . . . Talked to her about just kinda stuff at school . . . I don't know . . . Maybe what I'm gonna do that night after I get off work.
2. Yeah, yeah . . . weren't . . . talking . . . nothing really in particular. I think it might've been about school or . . .
3. Talking about her new boyfriend. I was extremely upset . . . cause we'd been going out for two and a half years . . . It's just that we were living . . . like she was living in another town and I was living here . . . and she was . . . didn't know . . . she hadn't really gone out with anybody else, so she decided she was gonna try this guy . . . as it is, we're going out again . . . I was really upset . . . now she's telling me, you know, . . . beat it . . . so I was really, really upset cause I don't hurt other people and I don't really expect people to hurt me.
4. Yeah I talked to her. It was an argument about something . . . yeah, that could have something to do with it, but I really don't think it did.

The in-depth accounts illustrate two relevant themes. One is that pre-trip conversation was routine with limited emotional content. The second is that some pre-trip conversations between young drivers and their boyfriends/girlfriends led to heightened emotions. Such talk could be considered an argument.

Some interviewees were with their boyfriends/girlfriends during the trip. Talk tended to be general:

1. Yeah . . . he came to my house and then we left and picked up another girlfriend. Just talked about what we're gonna do that night.
2. With me, talked about the same old thing . . . clothes, records, something like that.

Several respondents had not seen their girlfriends/boyfriends for several days. They were looking forward to visiting with them or telephoning them the day of the crash.

1. I was supposed to meet her after . . . Didn't make it.
2. I'd worked 3 to 11 that night, that's when I was still working at the gas station and . . . I'd just got off work . . . and came home . . . it was a Friday night and I was just gonna call her, actually.

3. No, I was supposed to go see her that night . . . she was babysitting.

Some interviewees replied that they had no opportunity to speak with their boyfriends/girlfriends:

1. No, I didn't . . . uhm . . . I hadn't seen her in a couple of days because I had worked the night shift and she had been babysitting during the day.
2. No, she ran away from home that day . . . yeah well, she ran away . . . she ran away for about two or three days . . . She was gone through the 29th . . . the day it happened. So, I didn't see her for three days.

Other significant persons young drivers may have spoken to just before the trip which might have influenced their driving behaviour were parents. So two questions asked were, "**Did you talk to your parents before you left in the car?**" and "**If so, what did you talk about?**" Half of the young drivers answered yes, one-quarter answered no and another quarter of the young drivers either forgot, did not answer or could not remember.

Some respondents who stated that they spoke to their parents before the trip, specifically said:

1. Uhm, yes, they . . . we . . . uh, I believe we just came back from dinner and I had to ask my sister if I could borrow her car . . . and she said, sure . . . so, I went and picked up the passengers and we were on our way down.
2. Uh, yeah, but like I couldn't remember what I was saying . . . like I didn't have an argument, just general chit chat type.
3. I said can I borrow the car and they said sure.
4. Yeah they said . . . have a good time and all. That's about it . . . and be careful.
5. Oh yeah, my mom had to give me the keys . . . and say, you know, like be careful whatever, cause I, you know, think . . . They didn't say much, they were pretty confident in my driving.
6. Yeah I did. I think they were getting company, so either one of them were in the shower, so I think it was my mom that I was talking to before I left. So . . .
7. Just to tell 'em where I was gonna go and say bye, that's about it.

To further illustrate the variety of talk, nine more abbreviated responses are:

1. Yeah, I told them I was going to my dance lessons.

2. Yeah, told them I'm goin to the store.
3. Yeah, mom told me hope everything goes well with the job interview.
4. Yeah . . . what the party was gonna be like and who was gonna be there.
5. She said have a good time and be careful.
6. Yeah I was going to the store for mom.
7. Talked to mom. I wanted to get a haircut.
8. Talked about my aunt just died.
9. I phoned just before the bus came downtown. Told me I should be home.

The examples illustrate that the topics of conversation varied from information sharing, requests for permission to drive, well-wishes, departure ceremonies (good byes) to meeting parent requests (going to the store for them). Parental concern about their sons/daughters was often evident with phrases like, "be careful", "watch yourself", and "don't be late". Only two young drivers mentioned that they had troublesome talk with their parents before the trip. One young man indicated that the argument upset him greatly which may have affected his driving behaviour.

The majority of young drivers who replied that they did not speak to their parents before entering the car indicated that they lacked the opportunity to do so. Parents were not at home when the young drivers left, or they were away for an extended period of time (holidays), or they were still sleeping, or they lived apart from the young drivers. For example:

1. No, they were in Hawaii.
2. They weren't there. They just left money for us.
3. No, I left quite early in the morning.
4. I didn't live with my parents then.
5. I was up before everybody else.
6. Nobody was around. Everybody was on vacation.
7. No, they leave pretty early.
8. They were at work.
9. Uh, no, they had gone shopping earlier . . . they weren't home at the time . . . when . . . well they were there when I got back from the accident but they weren't there when I left.
10. No. They live out of the country . . . they don't live in Canada.

To illustrate further how young people relate with their parents, a separate section was developed.

Self and Parents

Much is written about teenagers and the family. For some young people, parents are seen as irritating barriers between them and the experiences that await them in the outside world. For others, parents are seen as providing guidance for fulfillment of emotional satisfaction. Regardless, sociologists like Berger and Berger (1975) consider the family to be one of the most pervasive institutions in society. Parents influence their sons and daughters biological and social functions in a more direct way than any other institution.

The shattering demographic and social changes of modern times have affected the attitudes and expectations of both parents and youth. A steady rise in separation and divorce rates, in unemployment and welfare and in children leaving home at an earlier age has often produced strained relations between parents and offspring. These strains are added to the significant stress caused by young people's search for independence.

One test of the parent-young person relationship is a crash. To address this concept young drivers were asked, "**Were your parents aware of what you were doing?**" and, "**How did they react when they found out about the accident?**" Just over one-half of the young drivers affirmed that their parents knew what they were doing with the vehicle. However, the knowledge varied in specificity. A group of parents generally knew what the young drivers were doing, but they were not aware of specifics. As some young drivers said:

1. They were aware . . . my dad was aware that I was taking the truck to help move things, but I don't think he was aware that I was gonna take everybody home . . . or take anyone back to the school. And my mother always told me never . . . you know, never take passengers and things . . . that was always in the back of my mind too.
2. She knew, they both knew I was going to ( ) but they didn't know that we were going to the ( ).
3. Well, they knew I'd gone with the car but they didn't know exact . . . precisely what I was doing, but they knew I'd gone off in the car.
4. Uhm . . . they knew I was out with them (friends) and that we were going to celebrate her birthday . . . but they didn't know exactly where we were going . . . cause we had gone to a movie earlier.

Even more general statements concerning parents' knowledge of what the young drivers were doing were:

1. Yeah, I usually go to school with the car.
2. Yeah, . . . I don't know if they were aware I was at ( ).
3. Knew I had gone with the car but didn't exactly, precisely where.
4. They were aware I was using the car at work.
5. Knew we were out. Didn't know exactly where we were going.
6. Uh, it was my car . . . so . . . they knew I was around.

The responses show that young drivers share some information on their whereabouts with their parents. More specific information sharing was shown by another one-quarter of the respondents. As shown in the following abbreviated examples, these parents knew precisely what the discussants were doing:

1. Yes they knew I was in the library.
2. It was her (mother's) car. She knew what I was doing.
3. Yeah, I phoned them and told them I had to drive a few friends home.
4. Yes, a haircut.
5. Yeah, going shopping for clothes.

Other forms of knowledge about young driver activities resulted from young drivers specifically receiving parental permission to participate in events, parents (mother or father) being in the vehicle during the crash or parents requesting the young person to take the trip on their behalf (responses pertaining to picking up things for mother).

About twenty percent of the young drivers mentioned that their parents were totally unaware of their whereabouts. One reason given was that parents were not present before the trip. They were visiting, shopping, vacationing, or working. Three young drivers were not living at home and therefore specific parental knowledge of what they were doing was not relevant.

The extent to which parents were aware of what young drivers were doing may be a reflection of **how well young drivers get along with their parents**. Overall, one hundred and sixteen young drivers agreed, in some form, that they get along with their parents.

Of course, some young drivers get along better with parents than others. So, some young drivers answered in superlative terms. They responded: "excellent", "perfect", and "great". Other interviewees answered: "very good", "very well" or "really good/well", while more young drivers yet answered: "good", "fine", "well" or "get along".

Further along the scale of enthusiasm, a group of young driver commented: "pretty good", "pretty well", "fairly good/well", or "quite good/well". Answers like "okay" were also provided. However, these descriptors were often used in conjunction with further negotiated thoughts. Some replies were:

1. Quite well. Uhm . . . my mom is lenient with me . . . as far as letting me out later and having the car and stuff . . . my dad's more . . . doesn't like it too much.
2. I think I get along with them alright . . . we have our ups and downs like everybody.
3. Pretty good. I don't know how else to say it . . . I don't fight with them or anything, so . . .
4. Perfect. They're the best parents.
5. Uhm, O.K., I guess, yeah . . . O.K., not the greatest . . . Not really any problems . . . just about . . . coming in . . . what time to come in, that's about it.
6. R: Very well.
   I: Any major disagreements?
   R: Not major, a few small ones, 'bout the same as other one's.
7. Great, uh, mom and I are really close. We both try to keep the communication lines open . . . Dad, he's moody . . . he's hard to really get close to but he's . . . I'm not as close to him as my mom, but I am close.
8. We're O.K. We don't argue much. Uhm, we do argue, it's . . . she never lets me, uhmm, getting bawled out, or . . . me bawling her out . . . or my little sister gettin into that . . .
9. I get along with my mom excellent and my dad I get along with fairly well, except for, you know, I'm being the oldest out of three kids in the family and I'm . . . I'm a boy and . . . you know . . . hearing any teenager my age has problems with their parents, but, you know, nothing that . . . you know, I'm perfectly welcome to live at home and, you know, they love me living at home and . . . I don't have too many problems with them . . . they're you know, . . . they think a lot of me and . . . I don't really have too many problems with them at all.
10. Pretty good. Yeah, we got a better relationship. Course my . . . my mother and father are just about divorced now . . . he lives with somebody else, so . . . but we all get along pretty well.
11. Uhm . . . well . . . I think really well. Well . . . I get along with my father better maybe because . . . I don't know . . . I guess my father . . . I get along with him better . . . like I got along with mother better when I was younger . . . we're not too close.

Based on the examples and other answers not logged in this report, a relevant theme was parental preference. Although some young drivers get along with parents, they get along better with one than the other. The data show that the preference follows a strong sexual line. When preferences are given, girls tended to get along better with mothers and boys with fathers. Some points made by young female drivers were:

1. Get along with my mom really good. I can't have a talk with my dad.
2. Better with my mom than my dad.
3. Step-mom good. Father and I fight, but lately it's been better.
4. I'm closer to mom.

and several young boys said:

1. Better with my dad than my mom.
2. Father. I get along better with him than my mother.

A second theme that became evident was that young drivers' definition of "get along" reflects interaction. Getting along means no arguments, keeping communication channels open or no disagreements. It appears that much of the young driver-parent relationships are regulated by the young drivers' interpretative scheme for making sense of the form and perhaps content of interaction.

We recognize that overall there tended to be a regulative relationship between young drivers and parents. On a broad scale, young drivers indicated that parents knew of their general or specific whereabouts. If the parents were available, they often spoke to young drivers just before the trip. Most parents and young drivers got along, if not exemplarily, certainly satisfactorily. However, it is noteworthy that a small group of students did not get along with parents. It is now useful to relate this context to a question of **how parents reacted after they learned that young drivers were involved in a crash**.

Several relevant reactions could be extrapolated from the data. The first was concern or worry. When parents were informed about the accidents, one-third of them showed concern about the health and welfare of the young drivers, other drivers and/or passengers. As some young drivers indicated, among other possible reactions, parents:

1. . . . were just concerned if I was O.K.
2. . . . were worried about me.
3. . . . asked if I was hurt.
4. . . . worried that I was O.K. and that ( ) was O.K. . . . were worried that I was alright.

5. . . . worried how hurt I was.
6. . . . just wondered if I was O.K.

Concern for the passengers was usually implied by the use of collective we (driver plus passenger) as in the statements, "they were happy we were O.K." or "they were worried we were alright." Other sample responses were:

1. They were kind of upset . . . they were . . . didn't seem to be mad . . . concerned about, yeah me . . . and my passengers.
2. Well, first thing they said, was, are you alright . . . and then they just wanted to know what happened . . . and . . . they were just glad I was O.K.
3. She was kinda . . . I guess she was shook up too . . . she was worried . . . really worried . . . she was thinking of going down to emergency and all that . . . but she was really worried about us.

Still within the general focus of concern were parents who worried about the vehicle the young drivers were using. Simply stated, the vehicle belonged to one of the parents. They were, therefore, responsible for all repairs. Consequently as several young drivers explained:

1. My dad said I don't care if everyone is alright, how's the truck?
2. She felt bad about the truck . . . I put a lot of money into that truck.
3. They were concerned about getting the car fixed.

Responsibility for increased insurance rates was an affiliated concern for some parents. As one young driver clarified:

> Uh . . . my dad was just a bit upset because I have sisters and brothers and my brothers got into accidents before with a vehicle so . . . he was just mad about his insurance, that was it.

An injury producing crash carries numerous implications and, as such, becomes a focus for strong emotions. Anger is certainly a possible reaction of a parent whose son/daughter was involved in a serious crash. Twenty percent of the parents expressed anger. The following examples illustrate the extent to which parents reacted in an angry fashion:

1. They mostly screamed . . . They told me I was never driving the car again.
2. My dad's pretty mad the car was damaged.
3. He was mad I wrecked the car.
4. Mad at how much it was gonna cost to get fixed.
5. Mad . . . how mom was gonna get her car fixed.

6. They were angry . . . said you were wrong.
7. Angry that I might have caused it.
8. Dad started yelling over the phone because he thought I did it.

As in the case of parental concern, anger was displayed for basically two reasons: the damage to the car and the reality or assumption that the young driver was at fault. In fact, the concept of fault turned out to be a major negotiating device for parent reactions. As some young drivers stated:

1. He was, you know, concerned about my injuries, right . . . right . . . not basically whose fault . . . at the point . . . at that time . . . but he was concerned afterwards whose fault it was and he wanted to find out about it.
2. They . . . well, they weren't upset or anything cause they . . . like he got . . . like it wasn't my fault . . . the guy got the ticket.
3. My parents were in bed at the time . . . and so, they just came up (hospital) and there's no . . . no real argument about it because they knew it wasn't my fault . . . there's nothing I could've done . . .
4. He was upset but he knew in a way it sort of wasn't my fault but it was because I hit this person and it happened . . . it was an accident. He was upset that it's gonna cost money to get fixed . . . (car)
5. Uh I don't know . . . I don't think he was . . . once he'd found out it . . . it wasn't my fault, I guess, you know, that eased his mind, but I think if it . . . you know, if it was my fault, he would've been really pissed off.

The evident focus on "blame", "fault" or "cause" of numerous young driver responses tends to fall within the parameters of justifications, that is, socially approved vocabularies that help neutralize an act or its consequences. If the parents believed that the accidents were not the fault of their sons/daughters, they tended to become less emotional, more sympathetic or understanding and more matter-of-fact. If the young drivers' real or perceived freedom from fault was accepted by parents they then:

1. Didn't react badly. They just said "What can you do?"
2. Took it very well. "What can you do?"
3. Were calm, didn't really say too much.
4. Just said, "well, you should be more cautious."
5. Got everything straightened out. He calmed me down.
6. Just said, "Car can be fixed."

More specifically:

> He, he went crazy . . . cause I thought the kid was . . . you know, I thought the kid was on death's door . . . so, I said I went and killed this kid . . . he goes . . . and I said it's not my fault . . . you know, cause the kid just walked in front of the car . . . so, I guess he . . . he's pretty kind . . . he's pretty cool . . . like he was in an accident himself . . . he was all cut up . . . walked up to the cop and said, can you call an ambulance . . . he handles car situations pretty well . . .

However, when some young drivers were considered to be responsible for the crash, the parents' first reactions tended to be disciplinary and emotional. As some young drivers said:

1. No more truck for you, blah, blah . . .
2. Dad said, "I told you not to be so goddamn stupid kids."
3. Dad gave me shit for an hour and then didn't talk to me for three weeks.
4. They screamed that I could never use the car again.
5. Told me I drive like an idiot.

In part, parental reactions to a crash were based on the indexicality or contextual nature of events surrounding the accidents. The key indexical properties were severity or likelihood of injury, damage to the vehicle and the young driver's role in the accident, particularly the real or perceived blame and fault.

Self and Relevant Others: This Is The Way They See Me; I See Myself

In philosophical terms, to exist is to co-exist. "Being" through others is an essential characteristic of a person (Luijpen, 1974). People do not define themselves in isolation, but rather they do so through others. The others may be friends, colleagues, employers, teachers, etc. Each contributes to how a person sees himself. This self-concept plays a crucial role in human behaviour. In order to understand their behaviour we must ask **how young drivers get along with other people**.

Of the one hundred and thirty respondents, one hundred and twenty-four effectively claimed a positive social face. That is, they believed that they got along well with other people. Their definitions of sociability varied by degrees. Fifty young drivers expressed very positive views by using descriptors like, "very good", "excellent", "very well" and "really good".

Another thirty-two young drivers were affirmative but less enthusiastic. They used words like: "fairly well", "pretty good", "well enough", "o.k.", "quite good", and "pretty well".

To justify why, in fact, young drivers judged their relationships with other people to be positive, numerous respondents tagged on qualifiers such as descriptions of their personalities:

1. I'm a very friendly person,
2. I'm easy going,
3. I enjoy talking with people,
4. I'm pretty easy to get along with,
5. I'm extremely sociable,

descriptions of life events:

1. I don't normally have no problems,
2. I don't have no enemies,
3. I don't fake anybody,
4. No fights or anything,
5. We talk to boys,

and accounts of friendships:

1. I got friends from different areas.
2. I got quite a few friends.
3. Great, lots of friends.
4. Really good at making friends.
5. I'm friends with everybody.

Negotiated relationships were mentioned by several young drivers. They indicated that they got along except . . . :

1. I get along, but every now and then something comes up.
2. Fine, unless it's someone I really don't like.
3. Fine, depends on my mood . . . how a person strikes me.
4. Yeah, O.K., but not with teachers.

Starting with the assumption that most young drivers perceive their relationships with other people to be positive, it is useful to see how they believe friends see them. Accordingly, interviewees were asked for **short phrases describing how they believed friends saw them.**

Overall, young drivers who answered the question tended to feature positive feelings: "nice" (comments included "nice guy", "pretty nice", "nice person"), "get along" (comments were "easy to get along with", "seem to get along"), "O.K. or average" (sample replies were, "pretty average", "O.K. guy"), "shy" (responses like, "quiet and shy", "quiet

probably", "quiet, not talkative"), "easy going" (answers such as, "easy going", "enjoy my company"), "outgoing", "good" (comments like, "good person", "good guy"), "physical" (comments featuring, "jock", "preppy", "freak", "short"), "responsible" (answers like, "someone they can depend on", "someone to rely on") and "sense of humour".

Other comments reflected such themes as: ambition, creativity, intelligence, generosity, high standards, respect, stubborn, crazy, bossy, no enemies, leader, popularity. There was one comment per theme.

So, how do young drivers describe themselves? Theories on rule governed behaviour suggest that people judge themselves according to a positive face when there is no colleague to help maintain a critical face. The interviewers were instructed not to make explicit value judgements about the comments. As might be expected young drivers' comments produced positive judgements.

The judgements were often structured around a preferred quality such as "easy going", "good person", "outgoing", "quiet", and "sense of humour". Several sample phrases were selected for greater clarification:

1. Get along with everybody.
2. Easy going and friendly.
3. Easy going and get along with people.
4. Easy going and free spirited.
5. I usually say what I feel.
6. I know what I want.
7. I really like a challenge.
8. I make my own decisions.
9. I do things my own way.
10. I'm funny sometimes.
11. I smile a lot.
12. I have a lot of laughs.

Other descriptions given by young drivers reflected their being: "honest", "cautious", "intelligent", "generous", "self-conscious", "athletic", "pacifist", "content", "helpful", "loud", "curious" and "loyal".

Some negative descriptions included: "moody", "stubborn", "lazy", "mean streak" and "grumpy". About ten young drivers provided such descriptions.

Overall, the young drivers portrayed confident images of themselves in relation to other people. Few outlined problem areas, suggesting that the norm of self to others was favourable.

Self as Driver

Since a crash often reflects a lack of caution, we studied the extent to which young drivers envisioned themselves as cautious. After all, persons behave according to the images they have of themselves. Before delving into this topic, several characteristics should be presented.

When young drivers were asked how long before the accident they received their drivers' licenses, their answers were predominantly general, rounded off to segments of year, or year plus. Few gave precise answers in months. Some gave the dates when they received their licenses.

According to the answers, the bulk of the young drivers received their licenses more than two years either before the accident, or they received their licenses one year prior to the crash. Several respondents said six months or half a year, eighteen months or one and a half years or four months. Four stated that they received their licenses one month or less before their crash.

Several young drivers expressed uncertainty but "thought", "guessed" or "believed" that their answers were either accurate or fairly accurate.

A question on traffic violations produced answers which showed that fifty-four young drivers had received one or more speeding tickets over the previous two years. Nineteen had received two or more speeding citations. When some interviewees said that they had received tickets, they also included the total number of "points" they had received. One young driver had twenty-seven points, while others had sixteen, thirteen, eight and six points.

Overall, eight young drivers had received citations for running yellow or red lights, four each for illegal turns, reckless driving, and failing to yield the right of way, three each for following too close, unsafe passing, and no seat belt being worn, two for failing to stop at a stop sign and one each for unsafe braking and stunting, going the wrong way down a one-way street, drinking and driving, and failing to signal. Four were cited for faulty equipment such as no tail lights, no brake lights, and unsafe brakes, and three interviewees were not properly licensed.

Thirty-three young people stated that they had not received any traffic tickets during the previous two years.

When they were asked the question, **"Are you a cautious driver?"** nearly three-quarters of the young drivers answered with varying degrees of affirmation. It was not unusual to find that when young drivers stated how cautious they were, they helped define what caution means to young drivers.

One way that young drivers defined their degree of caution was by describing specific behaviour they considered to be relevant for cautious drivers. Some sample statements were:

1. I'm always shoulder checking.
2. Yeah, defensive.
3. Very cautious, cause I'm always looking around like even on a straight stretch I'll just . . . make sure where the positions of the other cars are.
4. I'm always looking at other people.

Caution meant the awareness and uses of driving habits such as shoulder checking, looking, stopping at stop signs, anticipating other cars and signalling.

Caution varied according to situations. Although there were times of non-caution, young drivers considered themselves to be cautious overall:

1. In the morning I'm cautious but when I'm on errands I'm aggressive.
2. Yeah, but when I don't foresee danger I'm not cautious.
3. Border line, more or less cautious. I know a lot of guys who . . . you know . . . put the gear in and pffff . . . they're gone, you know, like rockets . . . and then there's the guys that wouldn't go over thirty if you paid them a million bucks. So, somewhere in between I'm generally a cautious driver. I keep up with the traffic . . . I don't use the speedometer. Occasionally I go off in a binge and I spin tires and I go crazy.
4. Usually when I'm by myself. Cause I don't really worry about anybody else.

Several young drivers suggested that the crash caused them to change their behaviour in traffic. For example:

1. I'm fairly safe. Yeah, but more so after the accident than before.
2. Since the accident I'm more aware of driving than I was.
3. I'm more so now than before it (accident).
4. I'm more alert since the accident.

How much caution makes a cautious driver? Some young drivers rationalized this question. They tended to use dualistic statements such as:

> I'm not a reckless driver but I'm not as cautious as I should be because I get distracted too easily. I see . . . a person walking by, I look at the person and then look at the road.

Some believed that although they were not cautious, they were just cautious enough. What is enough? This appears to be a matter of perspective. Several sample comments outlining this line of reasoning were:

1. Don't drive that cautiously . . . just enough.
2. . . . usually I don't drive that cautiously . . . just enough . . . fairly recklessly at times. No, I'm kinda brisk, eh.

To arrive at a more specific picture of young drivers and their driving, the interviewers asked, "**What is it about driving that makes you feel most uncomfortable?**" Consistent with previous findings on caution, the majority of young drivers feel comfortable driving. However, when they were questioned further, the non-negotiable became negotiable. That is, young drivers felt comfortable driving except . . . The "excepts" could be categorized as weather, other drivers, traffic, driving events and geographic locations.

The weather condition which made most young drivers uncomfortable was rain; just rain, or rain in combination with wind, night or rush hours. Snow, and wind, were also identified as uncomfortable driving conditions for a few drivers.

Other drivers made young drivers uncomfortable because other drivers can not be controlled. As some drivers stated:

1. The other guy. Don't know what the other person is thinking.
2. Other drivers doing things they shouldn't.
3. Trusting people on the road during rush hour traffic.
4. Other driver . . . what he's gonna do.
5. Other careless drivers.
6. Drunk guys.
7. Other drivers who don't obey the law.

Heavy traffic or rush hour presented problems for some young drivers. During these times they got, "worked up", "excited" or "frustrated".

Some everyday driving circumstances or events that make young drivers uncomfortable are: "left turns", "passing", "tailgating", "cutting in", "shifting gears", "parallel parking", and "entering the freeway". Fewer in number, yet relevant, were comments about "getting hit" or "having an accident" (six comments), "road conditions" (two comments for ice and two for wet), "size of car" (two comments for small cars and one for big cars), "length of trip" (two comments on long trips) or "physical things" (three comments on features such as cracked windshield, poor battery and poor seat belts).

It seems that the majority of young drivers feel uncomfortable driving in certain climatic, traffic and/or vehicular conditions. The fact that many young drivers received major traffic violations and had had two years' driving experience or less prior to the crash did not appear to influence their judgements as to whether or not they were cautious drivers.

Self and Vehicle

Technology is a major fact of life. In British Columbia as in the rest of North America, the automobile is one of the most important technological innovations. The meaning we assign to the automobile certainly influences how we relate to it, and behave in and around it.

One-third of the young drivers drove their own vehicles at the time of the accident, one-third drove their parents' cars, while the remaining drove cars belonging to their sisters, brothers, or friends. The average amount of time the young drivers spent in a car per day was 1.3 hours, with most spending one hour or less in a car per day. Further comments offered which did not specify time by the hour:

1. Sometimes morning to night.
2. More on weekends.
3. On weekends I'm in the car all day. On weekdays, not much.
4. Not much.
5. Five hundred kilometers per week.
6. Thirty percent per day.

Taking care of the automobile is a strong indicator of the person/car relationship. It is not unusual in our society for people to metaphorically raise the status of an automobile to that of a being. For example, "babying" ones car demonstrates how a person/car relationship has become an acceptable part of language. In many households, driving the automobile represents a rite of passage, similar to graduation or marriage. To own the first car at a tender age is seen as one of many important steps towards adulthood and responsibility.

An important facet of responsibility is taking care of the car. To address this feature, interviewers asked, "**Do you spend a lot of time working on the car?**" The answers produced functional definitions of "working on the car". For some interviewees, work was interpreted as doing major repairs. For example:

1. Yeah, I do all the motor stuff. I know the basics.
2. I just recently started working on the Datsun, doing the body work . . . body work. I'm trying to sell it.

3. Yeah, I rebuilt the engine and tranny.
4. Oh yeah, I keep it . . . its always totally stocked.
5. I just rebuilt the motor.

Major work on the car was done either with partners or alone. Brothers, fathers or friends provided expert input or supporting help. Respondents who accomplished major work on their cars alone did so to have some solitude, escape other pressures like school, or to increase efficiency (no wasting time talking).

Major work on the automobile also crossed gender boundaries. Some girls, usually in the company of boys, took part in major repair work. As a segment of conversation illustrates:

I: Do you spend a lot of time working on your car?
R: Uh hmm . . . yeah. I've helped my ex-boyfriend rebuild his engine three times . . . I've done tune-ups on cars . . . can change a tire . . .
I: So, not . . . being chauvenistic, your're fairly confident?
R: Oh, yeah. I put a clutch together. Do brakes . . . almost every . . . almost everything . . .
I: Did you pick that up by yourself or . . .?
R: Boyfriends . . . Guys that I know . . . other guys' friends that teach me things like that.

For other young drivers, working on the car meant carrying out routine or general maintenance. At times, minor repairs like changing oil, checking the battery and windshield wipers and changing fuses were mentioned. Consider:

I: Do you spend a lot of time working on your car?
R: Yeah. Like I like to usually keep it clean and that . . . some days like if it's nice and I'm not doing nothing else, then I'll spend all day like polishing the chrome and keepin' everything nice . . . I don't want it go down the birds. I want it to look good you know . . . Like I always check to make sure like my oil is always filled and, and that 'cause I don't want to get stranded out somewhere.

One third of the interviewees said that they did not work on cars. However, they did "keep the car clean", "do tune-ups", "check and change the oil", "put air in tires", and "gas up the car". Such routines seem to be considered outside their definition of work. For example:

I: Do you spend a lot of time working on your car?
R: No, I don't work on it. I usually wash it whenever it starts getting

a bit dirty, I wash it . . . and wash my parents' cars too . . . while I'm at it.

The general rule appeared to be that young drivers who owned their cars did most of the major repair work, or routine maintenance or work.

To further outline the young driver/car relationship we asked, **"Before the accident, what did a car mean to you in your life?"**

Three-quarters of the young drivers described the meaning of a car in terms of practicality. Practicality encompasses such descriptive categories as transportation, getting around, convenience and utility. "Basic" and/or "just" often preceded the word "transportation" to form "basic transportation" or "just transportation".

Getting around is also considered practical. Some young drivers explained:

1. (An) easier way to get around.
2. Easier to get from one place to another.
3. (To) get me where I want to go.
4. Important for getting around.
5. (To) get from here to there.
6. (To) get around.

Closely related to getting around is the concept of convenience. A vehicle is viewed not only as a way to get to a destination, but the most convenient way in light of alternatives. A few young driver statements illustrate this analysis:

1. I don't like taking the bus.
2. It's easier to get to places.
3. I'm able to do things I couldn't do otherwise.
4. I . . . make things easier.
5. It's easier . . . instead of taking the bus.

If the meanings young people have of cars is related to times of their crashes (weekday afternoons), and the usual pattern of their car use (for practical purposes), meanings of "practical transportation", "getting around" and "convenience" take on greater significance. A notable pattern of relevance emerges.

Another kind of meaning given to a car involves concepts like status, enjoyment and freedom. These meanings differ from practicality. They involve driver/car relationships composed of heightened emotion, escape, excitement and pride. Several sample quotations given by young drivers were:

1. Car is to impress people.

2. It's a status symbol for me.
3. My baby.
4. My pride.
5. You can go wherever you want without parents.
6. You don't have to rely on other people.
7. Greater sense of freedom. Go where and when you want.
8. (It is) pleasure mostly.
9. I'm excited when I drive. I love driving.
10. (It is) a hobby for me.

To further elucidate meanings cars have to young drivers, interviewers asked two surrogate questions: "**If you could have any car, what kind would you choose?**" and "**Why would you choose this one?**"

Young drivers usually provided specific makes or names of cars. The major ones were: Porsche (fifteen), Corvette (eleven), Lamborghini (eleven), Ferrari (nine), Camaro/Firebird (eight), Mercedes (eight), Fiero (four), and Mazda RX7 (three). These selections tended to be expensive, powerful, sports-styled vehicles. Of interest is the high number of Lamborghinis and Ferraris.

The latter two car models tend to reflect fantasies of a lifestyle or image gleaned from television, movies or magazines, rather than a comment on preferred transportation. From an everyday perspective the Lamborghinis and Ferraris, two powerful sports cars do not tend to be as realistic choices as Corvettes, Camaros or Porsches. The latter are more visible on a daily basis and hence probably more desirable from an experiential perspective.

Numerous single votes were given to special cars. If categorized by geography, twelve were European (Audi, Rabbit G.T., Volvo, B.M.W., Volkswagen, M.G. Spitfire, Beetle or Bug), eight were American (Dodge Laser, Mustang, Dart GTS, G.T.O., Challenger, Chrysler Cordoba) and six were Japanese (Toyota, Honda, Prelude, Celica).

Some young drivers described style of vehicle rather than make. For example, eight interviewees would choose a sports car, six a truck and four a motorcycle.

Appearance, prestige and power comprised the major reasons for selecting such cars. However, many young drivers selected ideal cars on the basis of practical considerations such as economy, handling, small size, comfort and solid construction. If we review, more closely, some of the reasons classified as appearance we find they are related to practicality:

1. I like the body style and they're pretty comfortable to drive.
2. For the cheapness but they're posh.

3. Look great and good on gas.

Although many reasons for buying ideal cars were along the following lines;

1. Great style. Gauged body line,
2. Its style. Sporty looking,
3. I like the way they look,
4. Nice looking,
5. Sporty type,
6. Subtle class,
7. Everyone looks at it,
8. Looks like Joe Guy going to college,
9. Lots of attention,
10. Status. People take notice,
11. Sign of money,

Others were:

1. Good gas mileage,
2. Car not "breaking down",
3. Car holding its value,
4. General economy,
5. Smooth ride,
6. Handles well,
7. Drives well.

Even when discussing an ideal car, a large percentage of young drivers mentioned factors of practicality. When placed beside findings corresponding to usual use of the vehicle, times of accidents and purpose of trips, we can only conclude that a practical, utilitarian perspective of cars is relevant.

Self and Responsibility

The two areas of responsibility with which young drivers are most likely to be involved are education and/or employment. For some it may be both, meaning school and part-time jobs. Both institutions control individuals. Different individuals respond differently to work and/or school. To arrive at an indication of how young drivers relate to one or the other institution, they were asked, **"How do you do at school or at work?"**

The data showed that just over half of the young drivers attended school and worked at part-time jobs. And, it appears, perceptions of success in one area crossed over to success in the other. Those who did

well in school tended to like work and vice versa. The majority of respondents indicated that in school they were "exceptional", "very good" or "good". Comments such as the following illustrate the success of young drivers in school:

1. I'm on the honour roll,
2. I have about an eighty to eighty-five percent average,
3. I'm a top student . . . take school very seriously,
4. Do very well, get good marks,

More moderate success in school was displayed by use of terms such as "average", "O.K." and "borderline". At times, these descriptions were tagged with future expectations for increased success. Phrases such as "Average, I'm hoping to pull up my marks", illustrate a judgement with expected improvement. Some interviewees stated they did well at school except. For example:

1. Fine except for two classes. Trouble.
2. Fine except for calculus.
3. Fine except for biology.
4. Enjoy classes except for a teacher.

Further, several young drivers responded that they were not doing as well in school as they should have been. They did not "apply themselves", "study enough", or they "weren't serious enough".

Answers to how young drivers did at work were by and large positive. Over forty interviewees who worked, said that at work they did "good", "well" or "excellent". The descriptions were tagged with reasons why their performance was good:

1. Very well, I know the routine.
2. Real good. I'm aggressive.
3. Good. I'm a good worker.
4. Fairly well, no problem.
5. Very well, I'm always organized.
6. Good, I get along with everybody.

Qualities such as aggressiveness, getting along with people, being organized and being a good worker provided the basis for judging that work went well.

When young drivers were asked **about worries in life**, education became the dominant theme. Comments on education featured worries about marks, examinations, quality of teachers, completing school successfully, and passing a course. Worries about the practical side of the future also represented a dominant subject within the responses.

A number of young people asked, "Will I get a (good) job?" Future employment possibilities came up with young people wondering whether they would be a success in the future, or imagining what the future holds in terms of work. The concept of security was another prevalent concern. Young drivers wondered if they would have a good home and enough income. The final topic for concern was family. Some interviewees mentioned that they worry about something happening to members of their families. Just over fifteen percent of the respondents stated that they did not worry about anything. Life was good to them.

Partying

Stereotype images of young people almost always include partying on weekends. So we wanted to find out the extent to which young drivers fulfill or depart from this stereotype. Interviewers asked: "**Do you often go to parties on weekends?**" and "**When at a party, do you drink alcohol?**"

A quarter of the young drivers mentioned that their attendance at parties could best be described as occasional or sometimes. No regular routine was stated. Examples of quotations addressing the concept of "once in a while" were:

1. On occasion when I'm feeling good.
2. Sometimes, not very often.
3. Sometimes, when I feel like it.
4. Once in a while. I guess I'm not into it a lot.
5. The odd time I drink at a party but not very much.

Without any coaxing, a group of interviewees reasoned that how much they drank was determined by whether they were driving. If there was driving involved, there was no drinking. For example:

1. Not as much as my friends cause I'm always driving.
2. If I'm driving, I don't.
3. Depends if I drink. If I'm not driving, then yeah.
4. If I'm driving I won't go or drink anything.

Only about ten percent of the respondents stated that they did not attend drinking parties. At the same time only four out of one hundred and thirty interviewees stated that they partied "a lot". They said:

1. I usually go often enough and drink enough to get drunk and not pass out.
2. I go as much or as often as I can handle.
3. I go on my binges.

Consistent with the data on attending parties, the majority of young drivers who attended parties drank. But they drank with restrictions such as keeping within limits or staying with certain liquors such as beer and wine. Even then, there tended to be quantity restrictions. Some young drivers said:

1. I don't drink enough to screw me up.
2. Yes, four beers. I know my limit.
3. I know my limit for our bodies.
4. Yes, but I know my limit. I don't drink enough to make me sick.
5. Just usually drink beer.
6. The most I'll have is only two glasses of wine.
7. I quit drinking hard liquor. I drink beer.
8. Couple of beers. That's all.

The majority of young drivers who attended parties, regardless of regularity, did so with their friends. A further group went to parties with their boyfriends or girlfriends, and six interviewees stated that they went to parties alone.

The extent to which young people were usually drivers or passengers when going to parties split about half and half. A further twenty percent of the respondents answered that depending on the circumstances they might be either a driver or passenger. Factors that helped determine their role were who can get the car, whose turn it is to drive, and whether driving can be shared.

Of further relevance to being a passenger is the question, "**Would you drive with friends who had been drinking?**" Over two-thirds of the young drivers either stated "no" or they implied no. But, no was not the final word. It was related to alternatives such as driving in place of a drinking driver, telephoning relevant others for rides or taking the keys away from a drinking driver so that s/he could not drive. The above analysis resulted from comments such as the following:

1. I probably would ask to drive his car or I wouldn't go.
2. She would let me drive.
3. I usually drive. If someone else drove, I'd leave them.
4. I'd go to my dad.
5. If you're drunk you walk.
6. A few times we've caught a cab back.
7. I'd drive with someone else.
8. I would call my parents.
9. I'd take the wallet and keys.
10. I'd tell him to give me the keys.
11. I'd take the keys away and drive.

Some reflected answers included the words "no, but it depends on . . .". The "depends" reflected the amount a driver has consumed if the driver was drunk and if the events allowed for alternatives. Some sample responses illustrate this analysis:

1. No, but I'd want to know how much they've been drinking.
2. Depends on how much they'd been drinking.
3. Depends on how much excess.
4. Yes, if they're not drunk.
5. No, but it depends on where they were and where I'm going.

Experience is often regarded as the best teacher. Several respondents focussed on experience as the reason why they would not drive with a drinking driver. They said:

1. No, my brother was killed when he was drinking just by our house.
2. I did once. Damn near killed me. I won't do it any more.

Experience and commonsense led a few young drivers to take precautions rather than be placed in a position of having to decide whether or not to ride with a drinking driver. Some statements were:

1. Having a rule whereby each person gets a turn to stay sober.
2. Stay up the whole night at the place of the party.
3. Have the friend sober up before driving.

Only nine young drivers stated that they would ride in a car driven by a drinking driver.

1. Probably cause I'd been drinking too.
2. Foolish, but yeah, I would.
3. I guess so. If a long distance then yes.

Through increased emphasis in the media, home and schools, drinking and driving has become an important focus to a young person's growth and development. The young drivers' accounts of their involvements with drinking and partying suggest that carefree drinking is unacceptable. There was self-imposed monitoring related to the kind and amount of liquor consumed, the occasion for the party, and the reality of driving after drinking.

The extent to which the young drivers' rationale corresponds to traffic safety professionals' abstract norms and empirical measurements is not examined here. Of importance is that young people expressed views which demonstrate properties of regularity and conceptions of reasonableness.

Stigma

It is not unusual to discover that young drivers are stigmatized in newspapers or professional research journals. They are categorized by relevant others according to their behaviour vis-a-vis the broader society. The teenage grapevine often carries stories of how the police direct their attention to certain models of vehicles, teenagers, drivers' demeanor before the police and drivers' age. As a society we tend to support research which follows psychological assumptions which stereotype young drivers as social problems because they do not behave in a middle-class, middle-aged manner. So, interviewers asked, **how were you treated by police and Insurance Corporation personnel after the accident?** Did members from the insurance and legal institutions characterize young drivers "in effect" according to virtual rather than actual social identities?

The majority of young drivers suggested that the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia treated them satisfactorily. Their descriptions tended to feature "satisfaction", "good", "O.K.", "nice", "pretty good". For example:

1. I heard they like to screw people around but the adjuster was good. It was easy.
2. The adjuster actually took interest. He was really nice, really polite.
3. They tried to be as friendly as they could.
4. They were nice and told me what to do.
5. I felt comfortable talking with them.
6. I got a good deal. I got a new bumper.
7. They're better than they used to be.
8. The adjuster was pretty good about the whole thing.
9. They were very friendly and told me what could happen.

Crash-related issues which made the dealings with the Insurance Corporation satisfactory were; interest taken by adjusters, friendly service, a good deal on payments, and advice on what young drivers were supposed to do next. Before their accidents some young drivers had viewed the Corporation critically but their views changed to satisfaction after dealing with representatives of the insurance company.

Not as complimentary, yet "passable" were judgments offered by other young drivers. They felt that service was not bad. Some of the comments were:

1. Nice but snooty people work there.
2. She was basically doing her job. No more.

3. Quite good at times. I'd mark it fifty/fifty.
4. Not bad. They weren't really that helpful.

A final twenty percent of the respondents stated emphatically that they were treated unsatisfactorily by the Corporation's personnel. The complaints tended to revolve around themes like: inappropriate reimbursement for the vehicle, poor treatment of young drivers, and lengthy waiting time for settlements:

1. They asked too many questions that drive me nuts. They're no good. They try to put things in your head that didn't exist.
2. I had a bit of a hassle. I didn't have the information.
3. They didn't care. They were just glad to get the job done.
4. I was ripped off. They didn't pay enough.
5. The lady on the phone didn't care.
6. I argued with the claims adjuster about the worth of the car.
7. It took a lot of work to get them to pay. I.C.B.C. was a little off.
8. They wanted to pin it on somebody. Me.
9. They put me down and put words in my mouth.
10. It took forever. They processed three other cars first.

The discussions on the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia did not concentrate on treatments which might reflect the stigmatization of young drivers. Rather, the dealings stood on their own merit. For all practical purposes it was either good or not good, regardless of age.

A different picture emerged when interviewees elaborated on their dealings with police officers. Twenty-five percent of the young drivers described their treatment as unsatisfactory or degrading, which either touched on or directly implicated police behaviour. Witness the sample comments:

1. I wasn't impressed with the policeman. He assumed it was my fault. I was young.
2. Screwed me around every which way.
3. The idiots didn't believe me.
4. They think they have to search you because of your age.
5. The other guys were there. The police didn't believe me.
6. I thought they were ignorant.
7. I thought he thought it was a waste of his time. I was upset.
8. They were out to get me.
9. He wouldn't talk to my friends as a witness.
10. This one cop's a real jerk. He feels like punchin' kids.

The "us" versus "them" concept was prevalent. Some young drivers felt that "they" (the police) were out to get them, did not believe them,

or treated them with little dignity. This vocal minority however differed significantly from the majority of respondents who stated that they were well treated by the police. Several abbreviated examples presented by this group of interviewees were:

1. Quite nice.
2. Really nice.
3. Cops were really good to me.
4. He was real courteous.
5. Good. He didn't treat me different because I was young.
6. The police actually came and delivered the report at home.
7. Really understanding.
8. Really nice.
9. O.K. They took two points off me this time.
10. Average, cold. They did their job.
11. He didn't give us any hassles.
12. Generally all right.

As is evident from the examples, most of the time the police officers dealt with young drivers appropriately. Still, it must be remembered that a quarter of the respondents considered their treatment by police officials degrading, indicating stigmatization of young people.

Comparisons

To better portray young drivers involved in crashes, we decided to examine various facets.

We wanted to postulate the existence of certain entities which might be interrelated, change or remain stable. To accomplish this we completed a long series of cross-tabulations. Our goal was to discover trends, not significant differences. We tried to analyze individual accounts of everyday life, recognizing that we might lose the richness of description by placing the findings on a more objective footing. Much like a picture frame, the analyses are part of, yet apart from, the context of the portrait.

Number of Occupants In Vehicles

Based on a cross tabulation of 125 respondents, of the one-occupant vehicles, 65% were driven by males and 35% were driven by females. A similar trend was evident in two-occupant vehicles. However, in vehicles with three or more-occupants, the reverse was evident: 65% were driven by females and 35% by males.

The majority of one (77%) and two-occupant vehicles (70%) were involved in weekday crashes. Of the three-person vehicles, 50% crashed

on weekdays and 50% on weekends. It would appear that a significant number of the three-person cars mainly driven by females had their mishaps on weekends. Of these, 64% occurred from 6:01 p.m to 5:00 a.m. Further, the majority of one-occupant crashes happened from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. weekdays (56.6%).

As might be expected 52% of the one-occupant cars were on the road for practical reasons such as work, school, shopping or picking up/delivering. The remaining 48% of the one-occupant cars were on trips related to recreation, visits and giving rides.

The percentage of leisure driving increased with the increase in number of occupants, while practical trips decreased to the point that 69% of the cars with three or more occupants were on recreational trips. Conversely, 31% of the three or more person cars were on practical trips, of which shopping was the most prominent (12%).

Further, 81% of young drivers who came from work drove alone as did 44% who came from school and 50% who did errands. Forty-five percent of the young drivers who were involved in family/home-oriented activities, drove with one passenger, as did 44% of those who were involved in some kind of recreation and 50% who had been visiting. Finally, 44% of the young drivers who were in a bar or restaurant before they entered the car drove away with two or more passengers. These drivers were more likely to be girls than boys.

When number of vehicle occupants was correlated with weather conditions, the one-occupant vehicles were more involved in inclement weather (heavy and light rain, snow) than the two and three-occupant cars. This finding may reflect the need to drive to and from work, school, errands, regardless of the weather conditions.

A few more drivers from three-occupant cars felt they were to blame for the accidents (40%) than did one-occupant vehicle drivers (38%). Of the events that occurred in the automobiles just prior to the crash, animated talk with passengers occurred most often in two-occupant cars (55%), attention to the radio happened most often in one-occupant vehicles (53%) as did thoughts elsewhere (90%). Of the one-occupant vehicle drivers who answered the questions, 26% thought that the events in the car like the radio and thoughts elsewhere **did** or **could have** contributed to the crash. The potential or real pre-crash activities which were judged to have contributed to the crash increased for the two occupant (29%) and three-occupant vehicles (35%). As the number of occupants in a car increase so did the chance of in-car activities that led to accidents.

Since one-occupant vehicles were most often driven for practical purposes, parents tended to be more aware of why these drivers were

using the car (80%) than parents of drivers of two-occupant (70%) and three-occupant vehicles (72%). Of the three-occupant car drivers, 39% said they were not following their normal vehicle use pattern compared to 25% of the two-occupant vehicle drivers and 19% of single-occupant vehicles.

Whose Car Was In The Crash?

Fifty-eight percent of the cars driven by respondents were owned by either parents, brothers/sisters or friends. Forty-two percent were driver-owned. The majority of driver-owed were driven by males (74%). Of the young drivers driving another person's car, 65% had their licenses twelve months or less before their accidents, 24% had their licenses six months or less and 11% three months or less. Correspondingly, of the young drivers who drove their own cars, 46% had their licenses twelve months or less before the crash, 15% had them six months or less and 7% three months or less. It appears that the young people who drove other people's cars (predominantly girls) had the least driving experience.

Owners and non-owners were in agreement that they generally felt comfortable driving and on the day of their crash (owners 95% and 84%; non-owners 94% and 80%), that they were cautious drivers (owners 67%; non-owners 63%) and that certain driving conditions made them uncomfortable (e.g. bad weather; owners 27%, non-owners 27%).

The majority of interviewees who drove someone else's car were involved in weekday crashes (66%) between 12 noon and 10:00 p.m. (70%) during times of dry road conditions (70%). These people considered themselves more likely to be fully or partially to blame for the predominant two-vehicle side collision (49%) than did owner-operators, of whom 40% considered themselves partially or fully to blame. Nonetheless, they were less likely to have received speeding citations than were young owner-drivers.

As might be expected, since many of the vehicles driven by young drivers were owned by parents, more interviewees driving other people's cars talked to their parents before their trips (65%) than respondents who drove their own cars (51%) and more parents knew where they were (86%), than did owner-operators' parents (73%).

The majority of young drivers who drove someone else's car at the time of the accident had one or more passengers (60%) and drove for recreation. In fact, over twice as many of these drivers drove for recreation (68%) than did young drivers with their own cars (32%). Further proof is that of all young drivers who engaged in recreational

activities before driving, 83% drove a borrowed car, while 17% drove their own.

Just before crashing more young drivers driving borrowed cars than using their own cars were attentive to the road (61% vs. 39%). But, conversely, they were more likely to be engaged in animated talk (62% vs. 38%). More drivers of borrowed cars believed that poor observation was a factor leading to the crash, other drivers were more likely to have caused the accident, and if young drivers were to blame, it would most likely be for concentrating on such things as radios.

Since young people who drove borrowed cars tended to have more occupants than those who drove their own vehicles, they also tended more often to be passengers themselves (63%) and they preferred going out with friends (85%). On the other hand owners were more often drivers when going out (71%), but still preferred to drive around with friends (81%).

The respondents who drove borrowed cars were more likely to attend drinking parties than the young owner operators (non-owners: 62%, owners: 38%), and they tended to go more often with their girlfriends or boyfriends.

Since 66% of the owner-drivers stated that they worked on their vehicles, and only 43% of non-owner drivers worked on cars, it is reasonable to suppose that the former group of young drivers would be more sensitive to the insurance treatment of their cars. In fact, 46% of these people announced that the Insurance Corporation dealt with them satisfactorily after the crash. Of the young people who drove borrowed cars, 72% provided accounts of positive treatment by the Insurance Corporation. The same trend was not evident for police treatment. Both groups of interviewees (owners: 63%, non-owners: 67%) were almost equally positive about the treatment they received by the police. Nevertheless, over 30% of the young people in each group expressed some specific dissatisfaction.

Normal Usage of the Vehicle

Normal use of the vehicle at the time of the crash was related to whether the young drivers drove their own or some other person's car. When the trip was considered unusual or not a normal part of routine, 65% of the cars were driven by people using borrowed cars and 35% drove their own cars. On the other hand, the members of the former group tended to feel more comfortable driving on the day of the mishap (87% vs. 60%), and the time was more likely to be a weekday, 12:00 noon to 10:00 p.m.

By gender, the respondents who were not on routine trips were male, 48%, and female, 52%. It appears, therefore that any measure of the unusualness of the trip vis-a-vis normal driving patterns happened as much during weekdays as weekends regardless of sex. For normal-usage drivers, 58% were driving for practical purposes (work, school, shopping, deliveries) whereas in the case of respondents who used cars for a purpose not generally thought of as normal, 30% drove for practical purposes. Visiting was the prime purpose of driving for this group and the point of origin before the accident tended to be the home.

In terms of time spent in the car per day, the drivers who were involved in a trip which was part of a pattern spent an average of two hours in a car per day. For drivers on a trip not considered to be part of normal use, the young drivers indicated that they spent about one hour per day in a car. This observation suggests that the thirty percent of the crash-producing cars driven for unusual reasons (out of the ordinary pattern of use) were driven by young drivers who generally spent less time in cars.

Time of License

Young drivers who received their licenses between one and two years before the accident tended to spend, on the average, 1.5 hours/day in their cars compared to 1.1 hours/day for less experienced drivers. It appears that as they become more mature, drivers tend to stress practical facets of driving. For example, of the young drivers who received their licenses two years before the crash, 32% would select the ideal vehicle based on easy handling capability and economy and 28% would select appearance, often in conjunction with economy. The recently licensed drivers tended to stress power and luxury as factors important when selecting the ideal car. However, we could not say that the concept of power was a dominant reason by any license/experience groupings.

The normal usage of vehicle by young drivers who obtained their licenses one to two years prior to the accident was work/school related (75%), compared to young drivers who had been driving less than one year (25%). Routine usage of vehicles for leisure by drivers with less than one year driving experience was 72%.

Young drivers in all experience categories felt comfortable driving in general and on the day of the accident. Yet, 66% of the respondents who had been licensed for one to two years admitted some form of fault for the crash. It appears that interviewees did not consider driving inexperience as a key factor in causing the crash. Emphasis on the other driver's abnormal driving behaviour and their own behaviour was evenly distributed among all driving experience categories. Further, drivers in

all experience ranges considered themselves to be cautious drivers who generally felt comfortable operating a car. The more experienced drivers tended to use their vehicles for practical purposes whereas less experienced youths did not. Hence they were involved in 70% of all cases involving wet road conditions.

As mentioned in the interview analysis, if a car is driven for necessity like going to work, there are greater chances it being driven in inclement weather. Less experienced drivers were more likely to be leisure drivers who could choose to drive in better weather.

Cautious Driver

Sixty-six percent of the young drivers considered themselves cautious drivers; they shoulder checked, drove defensively, were alert, and checked the traffic. Young drivers defined caution, and judged themselves accordingly. However, the same percentage of respondents who considered themselves to be cautious also received at least one traffic citation within two years prior to the accident. In fact 45% received speeding citations, of whom 36% received more than one. Other violations were: driving without due care, no lights, following too close, or failing to yield. It appears that these violations were not considered relevant to their view of themselves as cautious drivers.

An analysis of gender revealed: 43% of the male respondents received a speeding violation in the previous two years while only 21% of the females had received one. Further analysis showed that three times as many females (48%) as males (16%) did not receive a traffic citation within two years prior to the crash.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The study addressed a subgroup of young people who drove vehicles in injury-producing crashes. If one were to judge young drivers in general, the minority group involved in a severe accident would surely be labelled as deviant, marginal, delinquent or abnormal. Also, because these young drivers consented to interviews they may be more extroverted and perhaps higher risk takers. Yet, are they? Or, are they a group of individuals who display rules of behaviour which are recognized as norms by society? We shall try to keep these questions in mind in the following discussion.

It has long been recognized in psychology, sociology and philosophy that people's self concepts play major roles in their behaviour. These

images often form the backdrop for intentional activities in which they engage. So it is with young drivers.

Overall, young drivers with whom we conversed, considered themselves well adjusted individuals who got along with other people. They believed that friends perceived them positively. Correspondingly, young drivers described themselves in terms such as easy going or good person. They saw themselves as cautious drivers who are generally comfortable on the road. They felt that they did well in school and work and had adequate communication and relationships with their parents.

Yet, a closer and more objective examination shows that their descriptions of themselves as cautious and comfortable drivers leaves some room for question. "Caution" is a word open to interpretation. If, for example, young drivers shoulder checked or slowed down they considered themselves to be cautious. Caution was also determined by situation, time and location. Simply stated: if need be, young drivers were cautious; if no need was perceived they were less likely to be cautious. The finding that two-thirds of the young drivers, most of whom were males, received at least one major traffic violation within two years preceding the crash was ignored when they judged their own level of caution.

Although we may question the accuracy of young drivers' self definitions of caution, we must keep in mind that they deem appropriate. Their situation is analagous to European immigrants who entered America during prohibition. Although it was unlawful to do so, the immigrants continued to make wine for themselves and their friends as they had in Europe, yet they were breaking the laws of their new country (Becker, 1963). Similarly, young drivers described themselves as cautious according to what they, as group members, considered necessary, proper and correct. Yet, traffic laws were broken.

Almost all the young drivers felt comfortable on the day of the drive. Yet significant variables could be highlighted which may illustrate some form of temporary emotional instability. To illustrate, aroused emotions arising from sporting or recreational events, anxieties caused by school or work activities, aggressions resulting from romance problems, tensions because of car and weather conditions, resentments because of negative circumstances like having received a sprained ankle, and thoughts about mental escape caused by poor work days may have influenced driving. Further, attention to passengers, the radio and/or cassette player, upcoming events and surroundings possibly contributed to the crashes.

When young drivers were asked to review the broad picture of crash events, they tended to describe fault in terms of the other drivers. The respondent was driving normally, while the other driver did the unexpected, resulting in a crash. And of course little could be done to avoid the crash, leading a number of respondents to say that if they were in a similar situation they would react in the same way. The driving patt(n of other drivers was called into question. However, young drivers who explicitly said that their own behaviour was suspect were just as likely to suggest that in the future they need to slow down, and be more perceptive.

The context surrounding the crash was composed of numerous factors. For example, half of the young drivers were on the road for practical reasons such as going shopping, going to/from school and work, attending events or running errands. Most had their licenses one to two years prior to the accident. Most of the other group of drivers had had their licenses for less than one year. They were driving for recreational purposes such as visiting friends after school, work or to go shopping. So it is not surprising that most of the accidents occurred on weekdays.

Consistent with the context of practicality was the finding that many young drivers' patterns of normal vehicle use were for school, work, shopping and errands. Further, the meaning a car had for the majority was transportation, getting around and convenience. Selection of ideal cars pinpointed major reasons such as economy, handling, small size and comfort. Work on cars was done to keep them in good running order and looking good. As a theme, the rule that the automobile is a practical tool was certainly prevalent in the data.

We could say that the vehicle or its use does not carry overly dramatic, ego-reflecting meanings, at least in a status capacity. There is a wider perimeter of practicality that surrounds the need for a car.

Young drivers' parents tended to be aware either generally or specifically of what young drivers were doing with the vehicle, had communicated with the young drivers before the crash and the young people and parents get along. After the crash most parents showed concern about the young people's safety. Some discussants negotiated their emotions on the basis of blame. If the young driver was not to blame, parents felt less upset.

From the standpoint of in-car socializing, most young drivers were alone in the car at the time of the accident. This finding is consistent with the practical purpose of the car. When passengers were in the car, there was most often only one passenger. At times, the passenger contributed directly or indirectly to the accident by distracting the

driver's attention. In fact, an identifiable trend was that as the number of occupants in a vehicle increased, so did the likelihood that in-car activities contributed to the crash. When young drivers "went out" the role of driver and passenger tended to be split. Factors that determined this role were: whoever could get the vehicle, whose turn it was to drive and whether driving could be shared. Two-thirds of the young drivers would not ride in a car driven by a driver who had been drinking.

The majority of respondents stated that they drank at parties. But, it is important to note that they apparently drank with self-imposed restrictions such as keeping within limits they set, or drinking only beer or wine. They did not tend to drink or party on a regular weekend basis. Parties were attended on certain occasions, depending on who was driving, and what the reason was for the party. Whenever attendance at a party occurred, it did so with friends, and most times in borrowed cars. Being with people for recreation was important. Being alone for practical driving purposes was expedient.

After the accident, a group of young drivers was dissatisfied with treatment by the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia. The usual perceived ill-treatments concerned insufficient reimbursement, social treatment by adjusters and the waiting time for a settlement, feelings not unusual in other age-group claimants. No mention was made about ill-treatment which specifically reflected the stereotype of teenagers.

Discussion about police treatment showed a major difference. A group of young drivers specifically described age-group bias toward teens by police as the basis for ill-treatment. It could be said that an "us" and "them" mentality was often implied.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In keeping with the findings, traffic safety educators are presented with an opportunity to reconceptualize young driver traffic safety programs. Here are several recommendations that may help improve the young driver traffic safety education scene:

1. As traffic safety educators, we should refrain from stereotyping young drivers as deviant, delinquent, unsafe or insecure individuals in need of compensatory treatment. Rather, we should design our programs to stress the positive images young drivers have of themselves. We should help them maintain this image and build on it. This would provide a constructive approach,

removing the defensive barriers young drivers may erect against adults' imposition of negative stereotypes.

2. There is little doubt that young drivers perceive their relationships with parents to be adequate or indeed positive. According to interviewees, parents tended to be concerned about their sons and daughters, to communicate with them and monitor their driving activities. Unfortunately, parents are seldom involved in major traffic safety education programs. It would make sense therefore, that as traffic safety educators, we direct more attention to the parents of young drivers.
3. Traffic safety educators should stress the theme of young drivers relating to the vehicle in terms of practicality and need. The belief that young drivers' relationships to cars are defined in terms of luxury, power, status and egotism should be re-evaluated. Many young drivers use a car for utilitarian purposes such as shopping, going to school and work or doing errands. What happens to the teenagers' routines once the cars are wrecked? How will they get to do things they need to do? Such sample questions may be fertile ground for programs.
4. A review of the provincial accident data and the analysis of interviews show that the majority of sixteen to eighteen year old driver injury producing crashes occur on weekdays, during daylight/evening hours. Although many happen during weekend nights, they do not make up the majority of crashes. Too often the weekend crashes are selected and sensationalized by the media, presenting only a partial picture of normal events. Hence, we should have young driver traffic safety programs address weekday driving behaviour. Perhaps recommendations three and four can be combined to provide a fruitful approach.
5. In designing programs, young drivers should not be defined categorically as sixteen to twenty or twenty-one year olds. Each age group has different interests, norms and socially approved or legally stipulated rights. As a beginning, young driver programs should address sixteen to eighteen year olds. They tend to have much in common. In addition, there is a difference between young drivers who drive their own cars and those who drive their parents', brothers' or sisters' cars. The latter group tend to drive with more passengers, creating situations ripe for inattention to driving. Some traffic safety programs should address this subgroup.
6. A review of the interviews leads us to conclude that young drivers monitor their drinking, partying and resulting driving behaviour.

The extent to which this monitoring is effective, from a social management perspective, is an issue which could be woven nicely into the programs. To say that young drivers drink and party helter-skelter does not match with the young drivers' perceptions. As traffic safety educators, we should re-orient our approach and build upon positive actions which young drivers identify with.

7. So often traffic safety educators look upon young driver accidents in a linear causal way. For many crashes this approach has merit. However, a large number of crashes result from in-car activities or driver mood. The point should be stressed that driver inattention can lead to serious mishaps. Factors which influence attentiveness are: talking with passengers, loud music, psychological tension or preoccupation with previous events such as love relationships or work incidents.
8. Based on the research, there seems to be a need for traffic safety educators to address the routine activities in which young drivers engage and which they consider safe can be considered dangerous from another perspective. However, rather than stereotype this need as specifically pertaining to teenagers, it should be stressed that drivers of all ages engage in dangerous activities.

Programs designed for young drivers should reflect the theme that an automobile accident is not a deliberately planned event. Rather, it is an unplanned happening, sudden and sensational which arises from miscalculations and these miscalculations may reflect a series of preconditions, actions and consequences based on young people's cultural norms. Therefore, traffic safety programs should build on the normative rules of young people in their context, structure, and goals. Such an approach would defuse the calls of politicians, educators and traffic safety professionals for expedient remedies such as raising the legal age for driving or drinking.

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APPENDIX A

Letter From British Columbia
Superintendent of Motor Vehicles

Ministry of
Transportation
and Highways

DRIVER LICENCE DIVISION

Superintendent of Motor Vehicles
Motor Vehicle Department
Victoria, British Columbia
V8T 5A3

Telephone: 387-6824

SUBJECT:

FILE:

The purpose of this letter is to advise that records maintained by this office relating to accidents, drivers or vehicle owners are retained in confidence and information relating to the same is not for public use. It is for this reason I am writing to you regarding the enclosed letter signed by Francis P.D. Navin, Ph.D., P. Eng., Co-ordinator, UBC Accident Investigation Team. Dr. Navin is requesting your co-operation in the study of young drivers involved in motor vehicle accidents.

The interview methods, as well as the confidentiality aspect of this study, have been investigated by the Motor Vehicle Department and I am satisfied, should you be willing to participate in this study, that a link between the information you provide and your name will not exist once the information has been compiled and made available for analyzing by traffic research people.

I would be most pleased if you would co-operate in this very important project as the information you provide may be a key factor in arriving at a solution that will result in fewer accidents and driver/passenger injury or death.

Yours truly,

P.K. Jackman
Superintendent
or Motor Vehicles

/sb

Enclosure

APPENDIX B

Letter From Head of Multidisciplinary Accident Investigation Team

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
2324 MAIN MALL
VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA
V6T 1W5

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL ENGINEERING
(604) 228-2637

UBC Accident Investigation

Dear Sir or Madam:

The U.B.C. Civil Engineering Department in conjunction with the Road Safety Programs Section of Insurance Corp. of British Columbia is conducting a study of young or novice drivers involved in motor vehicle accidents of mild to moderate severity and having no major litigation under consideration. The study is aimed at identifying pre-crash contributory factors and young driver preceptions and expectations of the event. Information will be collected through taped interviews which will take approximately 50 minutes to complete.

The interviews are open-ended and cover the pre-crash phase, the role of the automobile, the role of environmental factors and the respondent's life style. The identity of each respondent will be kept in strict confidence between himself and the interviewer and tape editing will preserve the individual's anonymity. Interviews will be held at a location mutually acceptable. The edited tape will be available for previewing by the respondent at our office. The Road Safety Program Section and ICBC will only receive the edited tapes. All links between an individual and the taped information will be destroyed.

Participation in this study is voluntary and the individual has the right to withdraw at any time without obligation or deprecation. A consent form will be presented to each respondent at the time of the interview (parental consent will also be requested, when applicable).

We will be contacting you by telephone within ten days to determine if you will participate in this study.

If you desire any further information regarding this project, please feel free to call our office at 228-6851.

Yours truly,

Francis P.D. Navin, Ph.D.,P.Eng.
Co-ordinator
UBC Accident Investigation Team

/kl

INSURANCE CORPORATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA